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LIBERIA AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY MIDTERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

This report presents findings and recommendations from the midterm performance evaluation of the Liberia Agribusiness Development Activity (LADA). The evaluation explores levels of progress made by LADA in increasing smallholder farmer incomes and private sector investment by examining the effectiveness of LADA's work with the Central Agricultural Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the extent to which LADA's approach has contributed to sustainable value chain systems.

Midterm results show that LADA has made modest progress toward achieving its goal of increasing smallholder farmer income. While LADA has invested significantly in farmer training and grant distribution, to date, these efforts have not resulted in increasing smallholder farmers' income and levels of private sector investment as originally anticipated. Recommendations are made for LADA to increasingly engage the private sector as an investment facilitator and mentor.

LIBERIA AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY MIDTERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

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ACRONYMS

ADAL	Association of Agro Dealers of Liberia
AIIC	Agriculture Infrastructure Investment Company
AIN	Agribusiness Investment Network
BDS	Business Development Services
BSC	Business Start-Up Center
CARI	Central Agricultural Research Institute
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CNFA	Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture
DCA	Development Credit Authority
DO	Development Objective
EM	Effective Micro-organisms
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FtF	Feed the Future
GCCA	Global Cold Chain Alliance
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographic Information System
GNI	Gross National Income
GOL	Government of Liberia
HQCF	High Quality Cassava Flour
IAS	Impact Advisory Services
IBEX	Liberia Investing for Business Expansion Program
IR	Intermediate Result
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
KG	Kilogram
KII	Key Informant Interview
LADA	Liberia Agribusiness Development Activity
LATA	Liberia Agricultural Transformation Agenda
LBDI	Liberia Bank for Development and Investment
LD	Liberian Dollar
LEAD	Liberia Entrepreneurial and Asset Development
LSA	Liberia Strategic Analysis
LOA	Life of Activity
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation

MFI	Microfinance Institution
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MOH	Ministry of Health
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
NAIDAL	National Agro Input Dealers Association of Liberia
NFAA	National Fisheries and Aquaculture Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPK	Nitrogen-Phosphorus-Potassium
PHH	Post-Harvest Handling
PIDS	Performance Indicator Database System
SADC	Selma Agriculture Development Center
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMS	Short Message Service
STIP	Science, Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
USG	United States Government
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations
WAW	War Affected Women
WFP	World Food Program
ZOI	Zone of Influence

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Social Impact was requested to conduct a midterm performance evaluation of the Liberia Agribusiness Development Activity (LADA), through the Liberia Strategic Analysis (LSA) activity. The objectives of the evaluation were to assess LADA's performance over the last two and a half years to determine which activities are working well and to identify which activities need to be refined. The evaluation focused its instrument design, analysis, and recommendations to address the following questions:

1. To what extent has progress been made in achieving the objectives under LADA?
2. How effectively has LADA worked with the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI), Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), and Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) in policy development, capacity building, and other activities? What are the successes and challenges?
3. To what extent has LADA's approach contributed to value chain systems (e.g. processing, post-harvest, and marketing) that are sustainable?

BACKGROUND

LADA is a \$19.3 million, five-year Feed the Future (FtF) flagship program, which was awarded in December 2015 and ends in December 2020. The LADA is designed to address low agricultural productivity attributable to small farmers. Theory of Change states that, *"If the private sector increases investments in the provision of inputs, as well as processing and marketing services, then Liberian Smallholder Farmers will experience greater productivity and increased incomes. This will make agriculture a more inclusive, attractive vocation, particularly to youth and women."*

The goal of LADA is to increase agricultural incomes of smallholder farmers through increasing private sector investment in the Liberian agribusiness sector.

LADA is implemented by Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA). Implementation focuses on three results:

1. Increased private sector investment in agricultural input systems.
2. Increased private sector investment in post-harvest handling support, storage, packaging, transporting, marketing, and auxiliary services.
3. Strengthened facilitation, market information, advocacy, and support.

LADA uses a Private Sector Development strategy providing grants, loan guarantees, and training across five value chains.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

LSA used a mixed methods approach for this evaluation. The approach included a review of relevant documents, analysis of the activity's quantitative Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) data as developed and collected by CNFA, Key Informant Interviews (KIs), and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with farmer beneficiaries and other stakeholders in Monrovia and LADA's four implementation counties: Montserrado, Bong, Lofa, and Nimba. These counties make up 80 percent of Liberia's FtF Zone of Influence (ZOI).¹

Fieldwork included 77 KIs and 12 FGDs with 131 total respondents. Data collected during KIs and FGDs were captured and analyzed using an iterative approach to identify common themes and patterns that were regularly triangulated and crosschecked with secondary data. This process informed the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations that are discussed in this report.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

¹ Feed the Future Liberia 2015 Zone of Influence Interim Assessment Report (Monrovia: USAID). 2016.

Evaluation Question 1: To what extent has progress been made in achieving the objectives under LADA?

LADA has made modest progress in achieving its goal-level objective of increasing income. Evaluation results show approximately 555 households have experienced an increase in incomes, a small proportion of the 15,000 households targeted to benefit from overall LADA support by the end of the activity. While two private enterprise Lofa County rice processors are increasing purchases, in general, LADA activities are not significantly increasing investment by the private sector through inputs, processing, or marketing services.

LADA has contributed to a modest increase in private sector investment in agricultural input systems and in post-harvest handling, storage, packing, transport, marketing, and auxiliary services. There is evidence of increased demand for agro inputs such as fertilizer, pesticide, and fungicide for vegetable production and for tree crops such as oil palm and cocoa. A large proportion of LADA Co-Investment Fund (CIF) support was being delivered to cooperatives in Nimba and private sector businesses in Lofa. Cooperatives in Liberia have a history of ineffective governance and donor support in the face of persistent production, management, and marketing challenges. LADA has yet to substantially strengthen the facilitation of investment, market information, advocacy, and support systems through the National Standards Laboratory or the Agricultural Investment Network (AIN).

LADA has successfully built a strong relationship with government, particularly the MOA. LADA support to a draft Food Law, Codex² food standards, and the National Standards Laboratory were all unintended. LADA faces significant challenges in terms of the limited number of entrepreneurs and private sector businesses engaged in agriculture for the activity to support. Farmers' expectations for free distributions and entrenched subsistence farm practices are also significant challenges. Agro inputs, mobile money, mechanization via contractors, and working with large-scale farmers and processors who are bringing in new technology are suggested as good opportunities for LADA to support STIP.

LADA has achieved its midterm targets for gender participation. However, without targeted support activities, gender results implied in the Theory of Change – making agriculture more inclusive and attractive to women – will likely be unmet. Current activities at a field level have been insufficient to move traditional gender roles beyond unskilled labor.

Evaluation Question 2: How effectively has LADA worked with CARI, MOA, and MOCI?

Overall, LADA's work with Government of Liberia (GOL) partners has not effectively contributed to LADA's objectives. CARI has performed survey work, developed training material, and acted as a trainer for LADA, but this work has not led to intended results of increasing private sector investment. There is strong coordination between LADA and the MOA. MOA has supported the buildings used by Selma Agriculture Development Center (SADC) and the Agriculture Infrastructure Investment Company (AIIC). MOA has also provided trainers for LADA activities. This training has not been effective in increasing private sector investment. LADA's work with MOCI is focused on support to draft food safety standards and enhancing the National Standards Laboratory. At the time of the evaluation, draft standards had not been enacted and new equipment requested by the National Standards Laboratory had not been approved.

Evaluation Question 3: To what extent has LADA's approach contributed to value chain systems?

LADA has attempted to generate sustainable improvements in five value chains by using a combination of training and financial support. LADA has modestly contributed to economically sustainable value chain systems in vegetables and cassava, and to a lesser extent in rice. LADA's support to the rice value chain has two variants: large-scale private sector processors in Lofa and cooperatives in Nimba. LADA's

² http://www.who.int/foodsafety/areas_work/food-standard/en/

approach with large-scale processors has contributed modestly to a sustainable rice value chain in Lofa, including diversification of sales into domestic rice markets and linkages with wholesale rice dealers in Monrovia. The sustainability of working through cooperatives is challenged by production, management, and marketing capacities.

LADA's approach has contributed to sustainable vegetable production and marketing, mainly through its support to agro input providers. All agro dealer respondents in the four counties noted vegetable producers/growers as their main customers. However, free input distributions reduce farmer demand and challenge agro dealer sustainability.

Some cassava processors report increasing sales following LADA cassava value chain support, while others report losses from cassava processing. Targeting the small but growing demand for value-added gari products may offer sustainable market opportunities. LADA activities in cocoa and aquaculture had just started at the time of the evaluation and, therefore, had not contributed to value chain sustainability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Question 1: Achieving the Objectives under LADA

It is recommended that LADA rebalances support away from underperforming cooperatives and increase the role of private enterprises, such as agro dealers, in training provision. LADA should also review how it could better address productivity issues as emphasized in its Theory of Change.

LADA should move toward being a business advisor, mentor, and facilitator, identifying and analyzing business opportunities, building linkages, and bringing in ideas and expertise. Support will need to be tailored to entrepreneurial opportunities with profit potential, and specialist expertise is required to develop specific opportunities. At the field level, staff need to be able to engage with entrepreneurs and early adopters and 'think like a business.' LADA should review its human resource capacity to ensure it has appropriate levels of private enterprise support expertise. CNFA should attempt to identify people with business and private enterprise backgrounds to fill its positions.

To increase private sector investment in agricultural input systems, LADA should emphasize strengthening agro input dealer-to-farmer linkage through:

- Increased support to interested agro input providers with sufficient capacity to establish demonstration plots and act as private sector trainers/extension agents.
- Support agro dealers' expansion into farm machinery rentals and leases.
- Provide further support to the National Agro Input Dealers Association of Liberia (NAIDAL) to advocate for and address the regulation of chemicals to assure quality and reliability.

LADA and USAID should review and improve due diligence processes for CIF grants and loans to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to reduce levels of non-performing loans. To avoid distributing grants to cooperatives that have a history of underperformance and to improve grant beneficiary and loan recipient selection processes, LADA should improve application of the criteria by strengthening its business analysis capacity.

LADA and the Business Start-Up Center (BSC) need to prioritize the development of AIN if it is to remain central to the sustainability strategy. LADA should ensure that AIN members receive services for which they are willing to pay registration and annual membership fees that can sustain the organization.

LADA should explore ways to work more with commercial banks in the development of financial products. International technical expertise should be employed to identify opportunities, such as loan products tailored to agriculture.

LADA and USAID should use the goodwill they have with the GOL to allow the intervention to focus more on private enterprise support. LADA and USAID should lobby the GOL to reduce market-distorting

practices such as free or subsidized fertilizer distributions. LADA will have to increase its own proactive networking to engage more with entrepreneurs such as through the BSC and other gatherings of commerce and business representatives.

LADA should develop more targeted gender and youth interventions. A strategic approach to gender should enable women as more participatory actors in the value chain, as opposed to simply laborers. LADA can specifically target outreach to young entrepreneurs by holding introductory meetings in colleges, universities, and business schools to discuss ideas and opportunities.

Evaluation Question 2: Working with CARI, MOA, and MOCI

LADA should reduce the role of government in implementation because it has not effectively contributed to LADA's objectives. LADA has successfully built GOL ownership of LADA activities, but this has not improved linkage between the private sector and farmers. MOA trainers should be phased out, and input providers and private sector processors should be used more as trainers. Support to draft food safety standards, passing of the Draft Pesticide, Seed, and Fertilizers Act by legislature, and enhancing the National Standards Laboratory should be advanced.

Evaluation Question 3: Contributing to Sustainable Value Chains

Rice

LADA should continue its work with the Agriculture Infrastructure Investment Company and Selma Agriculture Development Center by supporting the companies to enter rice retail markets. Support to Nimba rice cooperatives would require long-term embedded technical support in the areas of production, management, and marketing.

Cocoa

LADA should commission an updated, detailed analysis of the cocoa value chain. Performance evaluation results suggest markets are changing, with growing opportunities for low quality, high volume cocoa and higher quality value addition processing. A detailed study is required to validate these opportunities, understand the complexity of the market and influence from neighboring countries, and tailor support to best address opportunities.

Vegetables

LADA should strengthen agro input providers by linking them to vegetable growers as described under Evaluation Question 1. LADA should review and confirm vegetable and fruit export opportunities.

Cassava

LADA should build on the cassava value chain success stories, such as linking gari and flour processors to bakeries, packers, and retailers and Super Gari producers in Monrovia.

Aquaculture

LADA should not continue its general support to pond-based fish farming as significant expertise and time is required to address challenges in production. It is recommended that LADA limit its aquaculture support to grant provision in the remaining CIF round to innovative business opportunities with reliable evidence and a strong chance of success.

II. INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

Decades of resource mismanagement, civil war, and a prolonged Ebola crisis impeded Liberia's economy. Liberia continues to be one of the world's poorest countries, ranked 177 out of 188 countries in the 2016 Human Development Index.³

Food insecurity is widespread. Approximately 18 percent of the population is food insecure.⁴ Nearly a third of children under five are stunted.⁵ Poor nutritional options in terms of available diet diversity and a lack of positive nutritional behaviors are among the factors underlying food insecurity. This is further exacerbated by diarrheal disease from unsafe water supplies and lack of sanitation and hygiene.

Average per capita expenditure is estimated at \$1.93 per day, and 40 percent of households in the ZOI fall below the poverty line of \$1.25 per day. According to the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index, only 15.2 percent of women report that they have input into the household's farming, livestock raising, or other activities.⁶ Revitalizing the economy in the future will depend on economic diversification, increasing investment and trade, higher global commodity prices, sustained foreign aid and remittances, development of infrastructure and institutions, combating corruption, and maintaining political stability and security.

ACTIVITY BACKGROUND

Low agricultural productivity in Liberia is due to poor production techniques used by smallholder farmers, limited availability and usage of certified seeds and fertilizers, poor road infrastructure, and lack of electricity for processing of agricultural products. The sector is also characterized by underdeveloped value chains, limited market opportunities for staples, and poor linkage between producers and markets.

In response to these challenges, USAID/Liberia has funded the Liberia Agribusiness Development Activity (LADA). LADA is a \$19.3 million United States Dollar (USD) five-year Feed the Future (FtF) flagship program. It was awarded in December 2015 and ends in December 2020.

The LADA Theory of Change emphasizes private sector investment in inputs, processing, and marketing. It also stresses the importance of youth and gender. It states that, *"If the private sector increases investments in the provision of inputs, as well as processing and marketing services, then Liberian Smallholder Farmers will experience greater productivity and increased incomes. This will make agriculture a more inclusive, attractive vocation, particularly to youth and women."*

The goal of LADA is to increase agricultural incomes of smallholder farmers through increasing private sector investment in the Liberian agribusiness sector. This contributes to the overall USAID/Liberia Development Objective (DO) 2 for Economic Growth: sustained, market-driven economic growth to reduce poverty. Specifically, LADA contributes to two of the Intermediate Results (IR) under DO 2: IR 2.1 Food Security Enhanced and IR 2.3 Enabling Environment Supports Private Enterprise Growth.

LADA is implemented by Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA). CNFA plans to improve access to finance, quality inputs, mechanization, agricultural advice, and markets so that Liberian

³ UNDP, Human Development Index, The World Bank, 2016.

⁴ World Food Program, 2017.

⁵ USAID Office of Food For Peace Food Security Desk Review for Liberia, 2016–2020.

⁶ Feed the Future Liberia 2015 Zone of Influence Interim Assessment Report (Monrovia: USAID). 2016.

smallholder farmers can increase their production and participation in the market. Implementation focuses on three results:

1. Increased private sector investment in agricultural input systems.
2. Increased private sector investment in post-harvest handling support, storage, packaging, transporting, marketing, and auxiliary services.
3. Strengthened facilitation, market information, advocacy, and support.

The activity is implemented in Bong, Lofa, Nimba, and rural Montserrado counties, which make up 80 percent of Liberia's FtF ZOI.⁷ Target audiences include smallholder farmers, cooperatives, aggregators, processors, agro dealers (input suppliers),⁸ and other stakeholders engaged in rice, cassava, vegetables, aquaculture, and cocoa value chains with emphasis on reaching out to youth and women.

While the LADA activity works in five value chains (rice, cassava, vegetables, cocoa, and aquaculture), it does not have a specific strategy for each value chain. LADA's strategy can be seen as a Private Sector Development Strategy intended to provide grants, loan guarantees, information, and business development services done in those five value chains.

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

Through the Liberia Strategic Analysis (LSA) activity, USAID/Liberia engaged Social Impact, Inc. (SI) to conduct an external midterm performance evaluation of LADA. The evaluation objectives are to assess LADA's performance over the last two and half years to determine which activities are working well, to document lessons learned thus far, and to identify which activities need to be refined. The evaluation provides findings and recommendations to assist USAID, LADA, and its partners to learn what has been accomplished programmatically and administratively and identifies relevant actions necessary to improve the effectiveness of LADA interventions. The information will be shared with the various stakeholders engaged in the agricultural sector including USAID, implementing partners, Government of Liberia (GOL), private sector stakeholders such as processors and financial institutions in agribusiness, and other key stakeholders.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation focuses on the following specific questions in the design of instruments, analysis tools, and in the overall findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the report. The questions below will help understand progress made toward achieving the goals and objectives of LADA.

1. To what extent has progress been made in achieving the objectives⁹ under LADA?
 - 1.1. Will LADA interventions lead to an increase in smallholder farmer incomes? What progress has been made so far?¹⁰ Consider in light of Liberian economic context.

⁷ Feed the Future Liberia 2015 Zone of Influence Interim Assessment Report (Monrovia: USAID). 2016.

⁸ LADA. Annex to Q3 2016 Quarterly Report states, 'For the purposes of LADA, an agro dealer is someone, business organization and sometimes cooperative society, that engages in the sale and purchase of agricultural inputs. Agricultural inputs include seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, small farm machinery, etc. used as inputs in farm and animal production.'

⁹ This includes the goal, intermediate, and sub-intermediate results contained in the LADA Results Framework.

¹⁰ During the Briefing Meeting with USAID on April 9, 2019, it was agreed that the words 'and by what amounts' in EQ1.1 would be removed. LSA informed USAID that accurately capturing income to understand changes will be challenging and that income measurement is generally prone to error, difficult to recall, and a relatively unstable measurement if not captured well. (See also the USAID Food for Peace Indicators Handbook Part I: Indicators for Baseline and Final Evaluation Surveys April 2015, page 125, that supports this). LSA proposed to use the 'Most

- 1.2. Will LADA interventions lead to an increase in private sector investments in agro input systems; and aggregation, processing, marketing, and auxiliary services? Consider quantity, quality, and relevance.
 - 1.2.1. How much has credit use increased in different segments of the value chain?
- 1.3. What are the successes, unintended outcomes, and challenges?¹¹
- 1.4. Are there opportunities to integrate more Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnerships (STIP)?
- 1.5. To what extent is LADA addressing gender and youth in its activities?
2. How effectively has LADA worked with the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI), Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), and Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) in policy development, capacity building, and other activities? What are the successes and challenges?
3. To what extent has LADA's approach contributed to value chain systems (e.g. processing, post-harvest, and marketing) that are sustainable?

The evaluation questions were validated through a planning meeting with USAID/Liberia to ensure the above scope is feasible. The full scope of work can be found in Annex E: Evaluation Statement of Work.

III. METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach. The approach included a review of relevant documents, analysis of the activity's quantitative Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) data as developed and collected by CNFA, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) in Monrovia and LADA sites, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with farmer beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

EVALUATION APPROACH

Qualitative Data

Desk Review

A thorough review of background documents related to LADA allowed the team to gain a deeper understanding of the activity's operations and to establish the evaluation design and data collection tools. Literature review also informed the overall evaluative process, including conclusions and recommendations for future programming. A full list of the documents reviewed is provided in Annex A.

Key Informant Interviews

KIIs were conducted in the four LADA counties. KII data collection protocols were developed to address the evaluation questions. They were performed face-to-face with interviewees (see Annex C for the tool). These tools aimed to measure change, including direct and indirect benefits, due to LADA.

A list of key types of informants is shown in Table I, along with the total sample sought from each stakeholder group and actual numbers interviewed. Where interviewees were drawn from a group (i.e. agro dealers), individual respondents were purposively selected from LADA lists. The following criteria were used when selecting interviewees: (i) coverage of five value chains; (ii) gender balance; (iii) relative importance to LADA (businesses receiving larger grants will be prioritized); and (iv) clustering of interviewees (to reduce travel time and increase the time the evaluation team spends in interviews).

Significant Change' qualitative approach at the farm level to broadly see if income levels are changing and, if so, to fully probe and explore what is causing this change.

¹¹ This applies to the overall LADA activity.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS TARGETED AND REACHED

CATEGORY	KII TARGET	KII ACTUAL
CNFA Staff	9	10
CNFA Partners	17	11
GOL	11	8
Other Relevant Donor Programs	2	1
Agro Dealers	12	13
Aggregators, Processors, Cooperatives	20	20
Cross-Cutting Value Chain Actors	6	16
TOTAL	77	79

Focus Group Discussions

FGDs were conducted with groups of farmers and LADA county staff. Farmers were individuals that had been supported by LADA either through training, loans, or were in the vicinity of LADA support to an agribusiness. FGDs were used to get the perspectives of many people at once, as well as to promote idea sharing and collaborative group assessments. The discussions with farmers used the most significant change approach (see Annex C for the tool). These discussions focused on what had changed for farmers because of LADA. This included probing direct as well as indirect benefits. FGDs with LADA staff followed a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats approach to review performance and explore future ideas and options. Table 2 lists the respondent groups that participated in focus groups, along with the original target and the completed sample size per respondent category.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF FOCUS GROUPS TARGETED AND REACHED

CATEGORY	FGD TARGET	FGD ACTUAL
LADA Farm Beneficiaries	8	9
LADA Field Staff	4	3
TOTAL	12	12

Quantitative Data

Where possible, the evaluation used LADA quantitative data that were available from the Performance Indicator Database System (PIDS). The data were reviewed and analyzed for standard quantitative measurements such as: frequencies, mean, median, mode, and other summary statistics as appropriate and relevant to the evaluation.

Data Analysis and Reporting

Qualitative data gathered through the KIIs and FGDs were analyzed using systematic qualitative methods to determine common themes and patterns in the data. These themes and patterns were cross-compared and triangulated to develop a picture of what has occurred and is occurring as a result of LADA under each evaluation question. Quantitative data were also analyzed and compared to qualitative results. Differences were further explored and similarities identified to further strengthen the themes and patterns initially identified.

Where possible, quantitative data from KIIs and FGDs were analyzed and reported using tables, charts, and graphs. Also, where possible, the most significant change data captured during FGDs and LADA data were disaggregated by gender.

LIMITATIONS

Evaluation Scope: The evaluation covered five value chains, all of the LADA Results Framework, and addressed specific questions on credit, STIP, gender, and youth. The breadth of the study limited the amount of time that could be spent on each area of the evaluation. Therefore, the field level data gathered during the evaluation as illustrative evidence was combined with LADA PIDS data to add rigor to the findings. Evaluation results are thus sufficiently rigorous to inform management decisions given the similarity between fieldwork findings and LADA internal PIDS data.

Sampling Strategy: A random sample of respondents from each category was selected. However, in some cases, LADA staff members were called upon to facilitate some contacts on behalf of the team. It is possible that this could have biased the views expressed by the respondents.

Response Bias: Some value chain actors may have provided positive remarks about a LADA activity because they would like to benefit from future support. Interviewees expecting LADA facilitated loans or equipment may have been overly positive about the activity in the hope that it would make them more likely to receive future support. Similarly, respondents that had not qualified for expected support may have been disappointed and overly negative in some of their remarks. The team endeavored to minimize this as much as possible through verification of the data for extremities and using experienced local interviewers to probe deeply in case of any indication of such issues.

IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

QUESTION 1: TO WHAT EXTENT HAS PROGRESS BEEN MADE IN ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES UNDER LADA?

FINDINGS

Goal Level

LADA's goal is to increase agricultural incomes of smallholder farmers through increasing private sector investment in the Liberian Agribusiness sector. **LADA has targeted 15,000 households to benefit from LADA support by the end of the activity. The evaluation findings estimate that only nine percent of the households targeted at the midterm report a positive change in income.**

The results of LADA are outlined in Table 3 based on performance indicator data from the first quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2018. This data shows results after 2.25 years of implementation, representing 45 percent of its planned implementation period. Targets are included for the life of activity (LOA) to illustrate the amount of progress to be made in the remaining years of implementation. Data presented in Table 3 shows LADA has achieved 95 percent of its average annual income target. This figure should be treated with caution, as income measurement is generally prone to error, difficult to recall, and a relatively unstable measurement if not captured well.¹² Table 3 also shows that LADA has achieved 41 percent of its target for the number of households benefiting directly from United States government (USG) assistance under FtF. This result is consistent with an activity almost halfway through its implementation. However, the definition of 'benefit' is not focused on income as it includes individuals who receive training

¹² See also the USAID Food for Peace Indicators Handbook Part I: Indicators for Baseline and Final Evaluation Surveys April 2015, page 125; and Feed the Future Liberia 2015 Zone of Influence Interim Assessment Report (Monrovia: USAID). 2016, page 39.

or benefit from activity-supported technical assistance or service provision.¹³ This figure represents the overall number of households that LADA has assisted.

TABLE 3: LADA LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

LEVEL	KEY INDICATORS	ACTUAL* (% OF TARGET)	TARGET**
Goal	LADA 0.1: Average annual agricultural income of targeted smallholder farmers	\$548 (95%)	\$577
Goal	Number of households benefiting directly from USG assistance under Feed the Future	6,165 (41%)	15,000
IR 1	LADA 1.1 Value of new private sector investment in agricultural input systems leveraged by LADA implementation	\$72,779 (7%)	\$1,050,000
IR 2	LADA 2.1: Value of new private sector investment in post-harvest agribusinesses leveraged by LADA implementation	\$280,602 (5%)	\$5,250,000
IR 3	LADA 2.3: Number of aggregators and agribusinesses receiving LADA assistance in improved post-harvest handling - storage, packing, transporting and marketing services	63 (48%)	130
	Number of active members of AIN	252	NA
	Number of AIN members benefiting from membership services	105***	NA
	Number of beneficiaries receiving loans as a result of LADA facilitation	208	NA
	Number of loans guaranteed by LADA	11	NA
	Value of loans guaranteed by LADA	\$446,554	NA
	Percentage of women benefiting by LADA CIF grants	31%	NA
	Percentage of youth benefiting from LADA activities	NA	NA

* “Actual” is for the end of Q1 FY18.

** “Target” is for LOA by FY20.

*** Received business management training.

Source: LADA Outputs/Outcomes at end of Q1 FY18.¹⁴

To independently confirm the progress LADA is making toward its income goal, the most significant change qualitative approach was used. In FGDs, farmers were asked to identify the most significant changes they had experienced from interacting with LADA. Table 4 below illustrates that 63 percent of farmers interviewed have not felt a positive change in their lives by the activity’s midterm. LADA reports that it had assisted 6,165 households at the end of the first quarter of FY18.¹⁵ While there is no LADA performance indicator specifically measuring the number of households benefiting from increased incomes,¹⁶ evaluation results suggest that approximately nine percent of the 6,165 households, or 555 households,¹⁷ have experienced a positive change in their sales, profit, or income.

¹³ Feed the Future Indicator Handbook, Definition Sheets, October 2014.

¹⁴ Since the time of the evaluation, LADA reports that its Q2 FY 18 PIDS data shows improved performance for its IR 1 and IR 2 indicators. Related to the key indicators in Table 3, value of new private sector investment in agricultural input systems was \$148,884 USD at the end Q2 FY18,

¹⁵ LADA Outputs/Outcomes at the end of Q1 FY18.

¹⁶ LADA Revised Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan. September 27, 2017.

¹⁷ This figure is illustrative and indicates overall LADA performance. It does not relate to specific households or farmers. In its implementation, LADA operates at the enterprise level and not the household level. However, those enterprises are expected to be drawn from 15,000 households as per FtF indicators, and therefore, the evaluation uses that as a target.

TABLE 4: MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGES RESULTING FROM LADA AS IDENTIFIED BY FARMERS

	ALL			NIMBA			BONG			LOFA			MONTERRADO		
CHANGE	ALL	MEN	WOMEN	ALL	MEN	WOMEN	ALL	MEN	WOMEN	ALL	MEN	WOMEN	ALL	MEN	WOMEN
Nothing Yet/Negative Outcome	63%	56%	70%	50%	33%	64%	70%	100%	40%	85%	75%	100%	55%	9%	45%
Production Increase	24%	37%	11%	40%	67%	18%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	45%	36%	9%
Sales/Profit/Income Increase	9%	15%	4%	10%	22%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	27%	18%	9%
Farm Management i.e. Land Preparation, Compost Use	15%	15%	15%	10%	11%	9%	30%	0%	60%	15%	25%	0%	9%	9%	0%
Agro Input Use	4%	4%	4%	10%	11%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Increased Debt/Made a Loss	4%	4%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	18%	20%	17%
Supported Non-Agribusiness	2%	4%	0%	5%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Increase in Welfare	2%	4%	0%	5%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Evaluation findings.

Note: When interviewed, participating farmers could identify more than one change resulting from LADA support. Therefore, percentages in the columns of Table 4 do not add up to 100.

Sample Size Total = 54 (Men 27, Women 27), Nimba = 20 (Men 9, Women 11), Bong = 10 (Men 5, Women 5), Lofa = 13 (Men 8, Women 5) and Montserrado = 11 (Men 5, Women 6).

All farmers that took part in FGDs reported that LADA has been providing them with training.¹⁸ Nineteen percent of farmers¹⁹ also received LADA facilitated loans. Table 4 indicates that 24 percent of farmers report increasing their production due to LADA. Farmers report that this was usually due to LADA extension staff and trainers encouraging them to extend areas cultivated and plant more crops. Farmers receiving loans commonly stated using borrowed funds to hire labor for land clearance allowing them to increase their production. Only four percent of farmers interviewed reported increasing agro input use. This suggests that any LADA-related income increases are likely occurring due to farmers investing either more of their time or money in production. Income increases are less likely due to increasing private sector investment in the Liberian agribusiness sector as mentioned in the LADA goal statement.

Drawing inference between counties is speculative given the small sample sizes involved at this level. However, data presented in Table 4 shows production, sales, profit, and income increases are most often found in Montserrado and Nimba. In these counties, FGD participants most often reported that LADA training stimulated their production and sometimes sales. For example, in Montserrado, one farmer group received training in compost making that, through application, they felt increased their production. Bong and Lofa counties show the highest levels of 'no change' possibly because the FGD participants had not received loans through LADA support. It is also possible that farmers did not benefit the same way from LADA trainings where, for example, they received training in cocoa fermentation, yet these farmers increasingly sell before fermenting their beans.

Farmers appear to be increasing production rather than productivity. This contribution to change is different to that described in the LADA Theory of Change that suggests increased private sector investment in inputs, processing, and marketing services will lead to greater smallholder farmer productivity and income.²⁰ Table 4 illustrates that only four percent of farmers reported increasing agro input use because of LADA. No farmers interviewed reported increasing production or productivity due to changes in crop processing. Some LADA-supported large-scale rice processors in Lofa did report increasing purchases from farmers. This evidence suggests that some rice farmers have experienced increased sales due to private sector investment. However, the number of these farmers is small compared to LADA targets to support 15,000 households. In addition, the LADA contribution is unclear as LADA-supported rice mills were not in operation at the time of evaluation fieldwork.

CONCLUSION

LADA has made modest progress in achieving its goal of increasing farmer incomes. Evaluation results suggest approximately 555 households have experienced a positive change in incomes. This equates to only four percent of households increasing their profits, sales, or incomes among the 15,000 households targeted to benefit directly at the end of life of the activity from USG assistance under FtF. While LADA is not expected to achieve significant change at goal level by its midpoint, these results are of concern suggesting that the intended impact will not be achieved unless the strategy is revised. Evaluation results suggest that encouragement by LADA trainers and use of loans to hire labor is leading to farmers increasing production as opposed to productivity.

Minimal evidence was found to support the causal relationships in LADA's Theory of Change. While it is recognized that two Lofa County rice processors are increasing purchases, overall LADA activities are not significantly increasing investment by the private sector in inputs, processing, or marketing services that is intended to support greater productivity and increased incomes.

¹⁸ Farmers commonly reported LADA training in post-harvest handling, agro input use, and Farming as a Business.

¹⁹ Ten out of the 54 farmers that participated in FGDs had received a loan facilitated by LADA.

²⁰ Productivity increase might not be the priority of a farmers in a surrounding of abundant land and could be an indication for and incorrect assumption in the Theory of Change.

IR 1: Increased Private Sector Investment in Agricultural Input Systems

LADA support to agricultural input systems has achieved modest increases in private sector investment (IR 1). The activity has also achieved modest increases in demand for agro inputs (Sub IR 1.1) and in building agro dealer capacity (Sub IR 1.2). LADA's strategy to increase private sector investment in agro input systems is to develop and strengthen a network of agro input providers to increase farmers' access to, and use of, quality agricultural products. Evaluation fieldwork interviews identified that most agro input investment is in the supply of fertilizer, insecticides, and fungicides for the farming of vegetable and tree crops, which comprises approximately 75 percent of input providers' sales. Additionally, agro input providers commonly supply herbicides for lowland rice.

Evaluation fieldwork is consistent with LADA PIDS data for IR 1. Table 3 shows that the value of new private sector investment in agricultural input systems supported/leveraged by LADA amounted to \$72,778 USD by the end of the first quarter of FY18.²¹ This is approximately seven percent of the end of activity target of \$1,050,000 USD for IR 1. LADA reports that the value of sales of agricultural inputs from agro dealers supported/leveraged by LADA amounted to \$1,462,337 USD, with a final target of \$7,200,000 USD increase from the start of LADA specifically for IR 1. Progress levels between seven and 20 percent of end of activity targets appear consistent with evaluation fieldwork findings.

Increased demand for agro inputs (Sub IR 1.1) is found for vegetables, tree crops such as oil palm and cocoa, and with some herbicide use on rice. Examples include:

- An agro dealer in Nimba County began by selling inputs at local markets in 2006. A LADA staff member discovered him in one of the markets and "formalized" his business by helping him establish a fixed site shop from which he reports growing his business through demonstration plots and proactive extension services. This agro dealer credits LADA for getting him to place a higher priority on customer service and for educating him to better deliver extension services. The agro dealer feels that getting to farms and advising farmers has resulted in a 30 percent increase in customer numbers since he opened his store in 2016.
- An agro dealer in Nimba County reported a 60 percent increase in her product supply purchases over the previous year. She noted an increased demand for vegetable seeds, insecticides, fertilizer, and hand tools. She credited LADA trainings in business management, customer service, and extension services as directly contributing to her increased sales. The agro dealer anticipates continued increases in her input supply purchases to meet a growing demand.
- A metal works machinery provider in Bong County is a growing business that reports an increasing demand for their machinery (rice mills, cassava mills, oil palm mills, and kernel crackers). They are successfully repaying \$5,000 USD per month interest on a \$100,000 USD loan from Afriland Bank that they received with support from a loan guarantee from LADA.
- An agro dealer in Monrovia explained that, as a result of the increased visibility of their products displayed on shelves and in a counter provided by LADA in a co-investment, they were able to mark up their retail prices by approximately 25 percent.

²¹ LADA Outputs / Outcomes (As at end of Q1 FY 18)

Agro dealers report LADA support in building their capacity (IR 1.2). These key informants report gaining knowledge and skills from LADA training in business management (i.e. records books, inventory management), extension/customer service, and proper chemical usage and handling. Three interviewed agro dealers credited LADA with facilitating their formalization. Before LADA, these agro dealers tended to move between weekly markets to sell their wares. They also were not aware or trained in the uses and protection from the harmful effects of the chemicals that they sold. These dealers now credit LADA with the training that is helping them improve sales to farmers.



Figure 1: Peter F. Kollie, Owner of Quapolu Business Center in Totota, Bong

LADA data presented in Table 5 suggests 34 percent of trained agro input providers attended trainings and are keeping business records as a result.

TABLE 5: AGRO INPUT PROVIDER ACTIVITY LEVELS

COUNTY	ACTIVELY ATTENDS TRAININGS AND MAINTAINS RECORD KEEPING	ATTENDS TRAININGS, NOT PROVIDING INFORMATION, OR MAINTAINING RECORDS	NOT ACTIVE	TOTAL
Montserrado	12	23	1	36
Bong	4	3	7	14
Nimba	5	5	2	12
Lofa	2	2	1	5
Total	23	33	11	67
%	34%	49%	16%	

Source: Evaluation estimates based on LADA data.

Increasing private sector investment in agro inputs, as per the interviews conducted during fieldwork, faces significant challenges. These include:

- GOL's periodic free fertilizer distributions distorting input markets to the disadvantage of agro dealers;
- Farmers maintain a handout 'mindset' as the result of decades of free distributions by GOL and NGOs, leading to farmers waiting for handouts as opposed to buying inputs;
- The prevalence of subsistence farming, especially the common use of saved seed in rice production which LADA training encourages, as opposed to commercial seed;
- Prevalence of high levels of iron toxicity in lowland rice lands linked to uncontrolled flooding contributes to minimal interest among rice farmers to purchase fertilizers; and

- Presence of ‘cheap’ chemicals of unknown quality or efficacy.²²

Evaluation fieldwork interviews with agro dealers also show LADA farmer-training events are not being used to link agro input dealers to producers. LADA staff or partners such as the MOA or CARL provide farmer training. Some LADA staff question the capacity of agro input providers to deliver effective training that follows human and environmental safety best practices. Fieldwork interviews also show that some LADA-supported agro dealers are interested in growing their customer networks. Respondents expressed the need for opportunities in linking input businesses to farmers in demonstration or information events that better stimulate demand for agro inputs and increase future private sector investment.

CONCLUSION

LADA has contributed to a modest increase in IR 1 of increasing private sector investment in agricultural input systems. There is evidence of increased commercial demand by farmers for agro inputs such as fertilizer, insecticide, and fungicide for vegetable production and for tree crops such as oil palm and cocoa. Herbicides for rice production are also commonly purchased.

Examples of proactive agro dealer interest in building networks through demonstration and extension were also found. Opportunities exist to improve linkages through private sector-led training and demonstration events by working more with proactive agro input dealers. There is notable agro dealer interest to supply vegetable and tree crop inputs.

IR 2: Increased Private Sector Investment in Post-Harvest Handling

LADA has made minor progress in its efforts to increase private sector investment in post-harvest handling – storage, packaging, transporting, marketing and auxiliary services. LADA’s strategy to increase private sector investment in post-harvest handling involves post-harvest technical assistance, co-investment grants to upgrade post-harvest systems, and enabling linkages with sources of finance through loan guarantees to address working capital constraints. All private sector investment seen at the midterm was directly related to LADA support. There was no evidence of other private sector investors ‘crowding in’ around LADA investments.

‘Crowding in’²³ is when development organizations try to catalyze profitable private investment deals that otherwise would not have taken place. ‘Crowding in’ includes:

- Creating or seeding investment funds;
- Incentivizing local financial institutions through credit guarantees;
- Partnering with local institutions that are well positioned to help entrepreneurs and startups;
- Partnering with larger private-sector firms to scale up investments with shared commercial and development benefits;
- Providing technical assistance to help companies strengthen business management and advocate for the removal of legal and regulatory barriers that limit private investment.

The essence of ‘crowding in’ is that profitable investments have not happened yet but can happen with strategic trigger assistance acting as a catalyst. The assistance does not necessarily go to where

²² Some agro dealers express concern about the new entrants that have not benefitted from training in safe chemical use. One business owner, for example, hopes that LADA through the National Agro Input Dealer Association of Liberia can have periodic trainings so that the new sellers can participate and trade quality chemicals. As it stands, some of the new entrants buy cheap or counterfeit chemicals and sell at lower prices to farmers.

²³ See <https://www.usaid.gov/frontiers/2014/publication/section-3-crowding-in-private-investment>

organizations are already profitable. Assistance maybe applied where something can be addressed that turns an unprofitable organization into a profitable one.

In Table 3, LADA reports that the value of new private sector investment in post-harvest agribusinesses leveraged by LADA implementation amounted to \$280,602 USD at the end of Quarter 1, FY18.²⁴ This amounts to five percent of the \$5,250,000 USD end of activity target for IR 2.

LADA support to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through access to finance (Sub IR 2.1) includes providing (i) a capacity building grant to Liberia Entrepreneurial and Asset Development (LEAD);²⁵ (ii) Co-Investment Funding (CIF);²⁶ and (iii) facilitated loan guarantee arrangements with commercial banks²⁷ and LEAD.²⁸ This support to ‘crowd in’ private sector investment has achieved mixed results.

LADA reports CIF as a “key instrument to leverage private sector investment in post-harvest handling.”²⁹ CIF consists of a \$3 million USD fund designed to have three funding rounds. Funds for two rounds were allocated by April 2018. By September 2017, CIF grants of \$1,871,700 USD had been provided for eight agro dealer businesses, 16 aggregation/agro processing enterprises, and three agricultural support service providers.³⁰ Approximately \$1,253,680 USD was allocated to rice processors.³¹ CIF supports the Nimba cooperatives of Dokodan,³² Gbehlay Geh, and Kpodo, and the Lofa private sector businesses of Selma Agriculture Development Company (SADC) and the Agriculture Investment and Infrastructure Corporation (AIIC). CIF grants to cooperatives were approximately \$100,000 to \$130,000 USD.

LADA investment in rice processing equipment and tractors³³ was not operational at the time of the evaluation due to not having been received or being in the installation process. Tractors had also just been received by the cooperatives. The evaluation found that Nimba County cooperatives face significant production, management, and marketing challenges. Production challenges at Dokodan included iron toxic soils and broken embankments that meant swamp water levels cannot be controlled.

As an example of management challenges, in 2017, Kpodo could only supply 10 metric tons (MT) of a 25 MT rice contract to the World Food Program (WFP). Even though WFP pays a premium rice price, the cooperative could not satisfy this order. This supports observations by some key informants that cooperatives have a history of mismanaging assets such as power tillers by ignoring maintenance that led to early breakdown. These observations combined with evidence from KIIs question whether cooperative leadership can manage finance and the CIF investments of over \$100,000 USD for the benefit of their membership or to ‘crowd in’ private sector investment. Three cooperatives visited during fieldwork that have received large CIF investments requested support linking them to rice buyers. Cooperative leadership also reported insufficient working capital to finance their activities, such as fueling tractors.

In Lofa, LEAD supported SADC with a LADA guaranteed loan. After this was repaid by SADC, a second loan for \$400,000 USD from Afriland Bank was facilitated by LADA with a 50:50 loan guarantee. Both

²⁴ LADA Outputs/Outcomes at end of Q1 FY 18.

²⁵ LADA granted LEAD \$50,000. LEAD, in turn, matched this and disbursed the loan to Gbehlay Geh Women’s Cooperative. For a general description of LEAD, see <https://lead.jimdo.com>.

²⁶ Total CIF budget is \$3,000,000 USD. By June 2018, LADA has approved \$2,196,000 of grant funding.

²⁷ Such as Afriland: <https://www.bloomberg.com/research/stocks/private/snapshot.asp?privcapId=138259897>

²⁸ LADA’s loan guarantee fund has a cap of \$500,000 USD. LADA has disbursed \$350,785 by June 2018.

²⁹ LADA FY 2017 Annual Report October 1st 2016 – September 31st 2017 page 17

³⁰ LADA FY 2017 Annual Report October 1st 2016 – September 31st 2017 page 7

³¹ LADA FY 2017 Annual Report October 1st 2016 – September 31st 2017 page 23

³² <http://www.ainliberia.org/2018/04/26/866/>

³³ <http://www.tractordata.com/farm-tractors/006/6/8/6681-massey-ferguson-2635.html>

SADC and AIIC were in the process of receiving large, high-tech rice mills with the aim of improving rice quality under LADA CIF support at the time of the evaluation.³⁴ While the challenge of rice quality is being addressed, these businesses also face marketing challenges, as they were largely dependent on aid-related buyers such as WFP and Mary's Meals³⁵. However, these businesses reported increasing production and sales. They were more active in rice processing compared to the cooperatives seen during fieldwork. Evaluation results suggest there is potential to stimulate private sector investment by following the Lofa private enterprise rice processor model. For example, AIIC noted that they provided financing for the rehabilitation of a dam for the Meinah Rice Farmers' Cooperative in Foya, Lofa County. AIIC plans to rehabilitate more dams and provide extension services and credit to the various cooperatives as it hones its aggregation strategy. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) claimed that as a result of AIIC's entrance into the market, Foya rice farmers have increased their rice output by more than 25 percent.³⁶

Aprofin, a cassava processor in Lofa County, claimed that their sales have increased by 60 percent since receiving a larger mill donated by MOA where LADA facilitated delivery and follow up management assistance. This has led to the reinvestment of profits into the business. Their earnings have enabled them to install a new roof on their processing facility. A similar example is Agapeson in Nimba County. Here a larger cassava mill was provided in a similar manner. This support was reported to have led to reinvestment of increased profits.

LADA has improved access to finance via LEAD to selected Montserrado vegetable farmers. Four of these farmers were participants in most significant change FGDs. Two farmers reported that loans of \$300 to \$800 USD had helped them employ hired labor and increase production. The other two farmers reported difficulties repaying debt. One farmer reports she *"couldn't repay money as no benefit from garden. I now repay from small small things."*

Members of the Gbehlai Geh Women's Group borrowed \$100,000 USD from LEAD, at 16 percent interest for a six-month payback period. LEAD had received a 'capacity building grant' of \$50,000 USD from LADA to provide loans to women farmers. The loan to members of the women's group was for buying rice, expanding their warehouse to include a processing facility, and providing small loans to members. Members were only able to repay the interest owed after six months. As a result, the loan payback period was extended for six more months. LEAD senior managers felt the women would repay the loan. However, women interviewed during fieldwork from the cooperative mentioned that they were looking for another lender to pay off their current loan to LEAD.

A LADA-guaranteed Afriland Bank loan to a vegetable aggregator, Life Focus,³⁷ for the purchase of a refrigerated truck was leading to default at the time of evaluation. This company borrowed \$75,000 USD two months before their main supply contract to the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) ended as the buyer closed and left Liberia. The Life Focus CEO suggested the business would fail to repay the loan if they did not win future contracts to supply new clients. He was skeptical new clients would be found in time to save his company.

Business Development Services (BDS) supported under Sub IR 2.1 appears to focus primarily on training. Key informants point to examples of improved record keeping as a result of business management training. Indications that training delivered under Sub IR 2.1 has led to increases in private sector investment are not apparent. The War Affected Women (WAW) cooperative report they are continuing to struggle in rice production and marketing. This is because customers are not buying their rice, as imports are cheaper.

³⁴ The beneficiaries' contribution reported by LADA is \$257,500 USD for SADC and \$146,860 USD for AIIC.

³⁵ Anecdotal evidence suggests these buyers represent approximately 90 percent of sales.

³⁶ While the quantity of this claim could not be verified, it was consistent with other KII observations.

³⁷ <https://www.liberianobserver.com/columns/agriculture/lada-improves-capacity-of-vegetable-aggregators-and-food-processors/>

LADA training does not appear to have helped the cooperative address these business challenges. WAW reports needing to sell rice at \$22 USD per 25 kilogram (kg) to earn a profit, while imported rice was being sold at \$17.50 USD per 25 kg at the time of the evaluation. WAW managers also mentioned needing a rice buyer contract, which would give their member farmers the assurance that there is a ready market for any surplus rice they produce. At Gbehlay Geh Women's Cooperative, there was evidence of BDS training for the cooperative leadership, but there was no corresponding evidence of training application. Loans meant to increase income were misapplied for various nonproductive enterprises and family upkeep. Rice produced by the cooperative still contained stones and impurities.³⁸ These examples suggest LADA BDS does not appear to have addressed key business challenges.

CONCLUSION

LADA has achieved low levels of private sector investment in post-harvest handling, storage, packing, transport, marketing, and auxiliary services, which is consistent with existing PIDS data. A large proportion of LADA CIF support was being delivered to cooperatives in Nimba and private businesses in Lofa. Cooperatives face substantial production, management, and marketing challenges.

LADA capacity building grants to LEAD and guaranteed funding arrangements with LEAD and Afriland Bank have had mixed results. While some recipients report successful reinvestment of profits, there is concern that a number of beneficiaries face challenges managing debt.

There is potential to improve private sector investment by following the Lofa private enterprise rice processor model. This model is based on a large-scale processor or farmer serving in the capacity of aggregator, equipment contractor, and pre-financer to smallholder farmers.

At the field level, LADA BDS support has focused on training in record keeping. This training is not targeting key business challenges, particularly related to practical loan repayment, such as with Life Focus, and finding profitable markets, such as with WAW.

Private aggregators/processors and cooperatives regularly report receiving training in post-harvest handling practices provided by LADA. Recipients overwhelmingly emphasized that post-harvest handling training has increased their knowledge, but little evidence was found that it changed post-harvest handling behavior.

IR 3: Strengthened Investment Facilitation, Market Information, Advocacy, and Support Systems

LADA has made minimal progress toward strengthening investment facilitation, market information, advocacy, and support systems. To strengthen support systems for local and international trade, LADA has supported the development of a proposal for food law standards and is exploring co-investment in the National Standards Laboratory. A draft Food Law and Standards Act has been produced that was reported to be with the National Legislature at the time of the evaluation. Upon GOL approval, key informants report that an autonomous body will be established to implement the act. This body will require funding, and some respondents anticipated that this will come from service charges combined with GOL and donor support. LADA has also supported the development of guidelines and codes of practice intended to contribute to the safety, quality, and fairness of Liberian international food trade. This is linked to Codex³⁹ food safety standards in the World Trade Organization's Agreement on sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures. These documents were in draft form at the time of the evaluation.

³⁸ Since the time of the evaluation data collection, new mills were installed for the Dokodan and Gbehlay Geh Cooperatives. These new mills should be producing rice without stones and other impurities.

³⁹ <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/about-codex/en/>

In line with its food standards and safety activities, the National Standards Laboratory presented a proposal to LADA for a \$128,000 USD grant to purchase food and water testing equipment. At the time of the evaluation, USAID had not approved the grant, pending a clearer commitment from the GOL and a more convincing business plan for the laboratory. National Standards Laboratory representatives report that the equipment will facilitate regional and global trade and ensure public health and safety. Accreditation is needed to obtain international authorization for food exports. Key informants at the National Standards Laboratory further report that to acquire international authorization, they require operational funding, technical training/capacity building, additional equipment, and facility improvements. As part of this, the laboratory intends to train three staff in equipment usage and food safety extension, including the correct use of pesticides.

LADA had not increased access to market information or digital financial services (under Sub IR 3.1). A digital financial service pilot implemented with LEAD, Orange Mobile, and Gbelaygeh Women's Cooperative failed. This failure was reported as due to (i) challenges operating mobile phones; (ii) insufficient presence of local mobile money agents with enough liquidity to issue cash; and (iii) beneficiaries' inability to repay the loans. Key informants at Orange Mobile expressed interest in working further with LADA in Internet and mobile phone-based approaches.

LADA's support to strengthen the capacity of an Agribusiness Investment Network (AIN)⁴⁰ (under Sub IR 3.2) has not made significant progress. The Business Start-Up Center (BSC)⁴¹ houses and manages AIN that was launched in 2016. LADA supported the 2016 Annual MSME Conference to promote AIN since the theme of the conference was agriculture. Some observers suggested that BSC has not paid enough attention to the establishment of AIN as an independent member organization, with its own constitution and an elected board that can decide on membership services and advocacy for members' interests. AIN established a local network in Bong County and is currently in the process of establishing additional networks in Lofa, Nimba, and Montserrado counties. LADA reports that 105 AIN members have benefited from business training in Bong County.⁴² AIN has not made any progress collecting market price and/or quantity information as required under Sub IR 3.1. LADA reports that this will start as soon as the local networks become established.

CONCLUSION

LADA has not yet significantly strengthened the facilitation of investment, market information, advocacy, or support systems. Support to the National Standards Laboratory could help support systems for local food and water. LADA's work to improve food safety and standards has potential to strengthen the policy environment if the GOL passes and implements draft acts and codes of practice that the activity has supported.

AIN was not sufficiently established at the time of the evaluation to perform its intended role of supporting long run value chain investment. BSC is implementing and managing AIN and appears to be making slow progress developing a county-level network. Members do not show willingness to pay for AIN services.

QUESTION 1.1: WILL LADA INTERVENTIONS LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN SMALLHOLDER FARMER INCOMES? WHAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE SO FAR? CONSIDER IN LIGHT OF LIBERIAN ECONOMIC CONTEXT.

⁴⁰ <http://www.ainliberia.org/about-us/>

⁴¹ BSC is a separate organization tasked with implementing AIN and maintaining it after LADA has ended.
<http://www.bscmonrovia.com>

⁴² LADA Outputs / Outcomes (As at end of Q1 FY 18)

FINDINGS

To assess performance related to this question, the evaluation considers and draws evidence from each value chain. As LADA's work in rice, vegetables, and cassava is more advanced during the first half of the activity, these value chains provide most of the evidence. The evaluation does not specifically assess each value chain individually as LADA uses a Theory of Change focused on private sector investment leading to increased income. The evaluation, therefore, addresses this across all LADA value chains.

LADA interventions are unlikely to lead to an increase in smallholder farmer income. LADA's progress in increasing incomes is low. As reported earlier, it is suggested that approximately 555 LADA-supported farmers of the 6,165 households benefiting to date have had an increase in income during the first half of LADA. However, there are a number of specific businesses supported by LADA that have potential to succeed (i.e. AIIIC, SADC, Potam Enterprises).

The Liberian economic context is challenging (see Annex G for details). The Liberian economy has traditionally relied upon mineral extraction and not diversified to create employment. It depends significantly on foreign financial assistance and remittances from the diaspora. The Liberian Dollar (LD) exchange rate had depreciated 28 percent between January 2017 and March 2018.⁴³ At the time of the evaluation, interest rates were around 14 percent, reflecting the average from 2003 to 2017.⁴⁴

The population is young, growing, and becoming increasingly urbanized. Per capita net income is low (approximately \$380 USD per annum)⁴⁵ and presents a flat trend suggesting the average consumer is poor. Population dynamics suggest increasing markets for low cost food to supply a growing urban poor. This supports fieldwork findings for vibrant vegetable markets, particularly for crops like bitter ball, pepper, and cabbage. Interviews and market observation indicated vegetable markets offering potential to increase sales and smallholder incomes from all LADA counties supplying Monrovia with these types of vegetables. An agro dealer in Bong County said, *"Vegetable farmers can afford fertilizer and pesticide, whereas rice farmers can't afford the expense."* The agro dealer added, *"Farmers who are looking to get cash prefer to grow vegetables rather than rice."* Potential may also exist to supply higher value, better quality exotic vegetables to wealthy urban consumers. Higher quality and supply consistency requirements are suggested as challenging smallholder's ability to profitably engage in these markets. Higher capacity specialist producers, such as Sumo Farms discussed more in the Findings Section of Evaluation Question 1.2, are more likely to be successful in addressing these opportunities.

The depreciating LD has made imports more expensive and exports more valuable in terms of the local currency. Cocoa is the export-oriented crop in LADA's value chain portfolio that should benefit the most from this change. Import-substituting crops, such as rice, should also benefit from the depreciation. Ghana and the Ivory Coast are major producers of cocoa and have considerable influence over the regional value chain. Coupled with existing private sector investments from Liberia, Guinea, Ghana, and Ivory Coast, this is potentially the most complex and fluid value chain that LADA engages in. Cocoa is emphasized in the 2017 USAID Transition Paper on Economic Diversification for Inclusive Growth: *"The greatest profits per metric ton of production come from Grade 1 cocoa."*⁴⁶ Evaluation respondents noted the increasing numbers of cocoa buyers entering the market for low quality cocoa. They suggested that the prices offered for low quality cocoa reduces incentives for farmers to improve quality. These buyers enter the community and offer cash payments, making aggregated group sales via cooperatives less attractive.

An illustrative example of challenges faced by cocoa cooperatives is Sebehill Kalasumai Multipurpose Coop in Lofa County. In the past, Sebehill received significant support from International Fund for Agricultural

⁴³ IMF Press Release No. 18-97, March 2018

⁴⁴ tradingeconomics.com/Central Bank of Liberia, 2018

⁴⁵ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD?locations=LR>

⁴⁶ http://usaidliberiakportal.com/resource_library/liberia-development-conference-anthology/

Development and ACDI/VOCA. From 2012 to 2017, the cooperative had a contract with the Liberian Assets and Development Company in Monrovia to supply quality cocoa, but it has not been renewed. Sebehill leadership shared, “Most farmers are not drying cocoa as buyers will take wet cocoa of low quality and pay cash.” This suggests aggregators enjoy economies of scale when drying cocoa. LADA’s training on how to ferment cocoa is not likely to be used by farmers, as they will sell wet cocoa before performing any fermentation. As a result of market dynamics, cooperative sales volumes for Sebehill show a clear downward trend. Sales for 2014/15 were 207 MT. These declined in subsequent years to 180 MT in 2015/16 and 138 MT in 2016/17.⁴⁷

The depreciation of the LD does not appear to have helped LADA support to rice growers. With the currency’s decline, rice imports should be more expensive and import substitution easier.⁴⁸ Imported rice, however, remains dominant in markets. As reported earlier, LADA support to rice can be broadly divided between cooperatives, primarily in Nimba, and private sector businesses, primarily AIIC and SADC in Lofa County. LADA support to cooperatives is aligned with the MOA National Rice Development Strategy of Liberia policy in terms of (i) facilitating linkage between producers and traders by encouraging formation of farmer based organizations such as cooperatives; (ii) improving post-harvest handling practices such as threshing, drying, cleaning, storage, and milling; and (iii) mechanization.⁴⁹ However, the LADA approach supporting Nimba rice cooperatives is yet to prove effective in terms of increasing smallholder farmer’s income. Specific value chain approaches are discussed in more detail in the Findings Section of Evaluation Question 3.

As detailed in the Findings Section of Evaluation Question 1, IR2, interviews indicated that SADC and AIIC, two Lofa rice processors, are increasing traded rice volumes and have the potential to continue doing this in future. AIIC claims that pre-financing cooperatives that supply them with rice has enabled the cooperatives to purchase fertilizer resulting in members’ rice productivity and yields increasing from one to two MT per hectare to four to five MT per hectare.⁵⁰ Both of these processors face challenges. For example, approximately 90 percent of sales are to NGOs, an unsustainable buyer. In addition, SADC and AIIC may increasingly produce their own rice. However, these businesses currently present the best potential for current LADA interventions to increase smallholder rice farmer’s incomes in the future.

Future smallholder income potential from the cassava value chain is suggested for added value products. Some LADA-supported



Figure 2: Welekemei Farmers' Coop with packets of their Super Gari

⁴⁷ The evaluation recognizes that Ivory Coast is an influential regional presence in cocoa markets and that there is private sector investment in the sector.

⁴⁸ At the time of fieldwork, imported rice cost approximately \$17.50 USD per 25 kg bag. Local rice processors reported needing a price of no less than \$3,200 LD (\$22 USD per 25 kg bag). Assuming all other factors remain constant, if the exchange rate at the time of fieldwork of \$146 LD to \$1 USD depreciated to approximately \$180 LD to \$1 USD, then local rice would become competitive with imported rice. For example, with a local processed rice price of \$3,200 LD per 25 kg, then an exchange of \$183 LD to \$1 USD (\$17.50 USD/25 kg x 183) would increase the price of imported rice to approximately \$3,200 LD.

⁴⁹ National Rice Development Strategy of Liberia Doubling Rice Production by 2018 Ministry of Agriculture Monrovia, Liberia May 2012.

⁵⁰ While the quantity of this claim could not be verified, it was consistent with other KII observations.

cassava processors report sales growth (Logan and Logan, APROFIN, Falama, Welekemei Rural Women, and Agapeson) while others report gari⁵¹ production as loss making (i.e. Rise Agricultural Company). More highly processed Super Gari and Super Farina offer value addition potential to a ‘snack’ market. KIIs indicate this market is relatively small but growing. Several processors claim incomes from the sale of gari, Super Gari, and Super Farina of between \$200 and \$400 USD per month.⁵²

LADA support to aquaculture is just beginning. In line with its Private Sector Development approach, LADA facilitated the distribution of 15 fish pelleting machines that were purchased by MOA. As the mills did not function well, LADA supported improvement and repairs to the machines. In collaboration with CARI, LADA also worked on a better fish feed formula with locally available ingredients. Only two of the 15 fish pelleting machines were reported as working at the time of the evaluation, suggesting limited future income potential. Supporting smallholder pond-based fish farming presents significant challenges in terms of feed and fingerling provision. KIIs and observation suggest LADA does not have the capacity or remaining time to successfully overcome these challenges. While LADA support is unlikely to significantly or sustainably increase smallholder pond-based incomes, other innovative ideas exist such as versions of river-based cage fishing. Available information suggests that cage fishing may not face the food challenges that exist in pond fishing. Further research is required to assess this in detail.

CONCLUSION

LADA is unlikely to increase smallholder farmers’ income, particularly through its training and cooperative oriented support. LADA’s support to private sector businesses such as the Lofa rice processors and agro dealers is suggested as having greater income-generating potential.

Review of the economic context suggests depreciation of the LD is supporting export-oriented crops (i.e. cocoa and niche markets for ‘red’ rice). This depreciation is also making imported farm inputs more expensive (i.e. inorganic fertilizer and chemical treatments). Depreciation of the LD should also support import substitution, although little evidence was found of this happening in rice markets.

Urban population growth is suggested as leading to opportunities supplying high volume urban markets for vegetables (i.e. peppers, bitter ball, and cabbage). An urban, relatively wealthy middle class may support exotic vegetable value chains, value-added cassava products (i.e. Super Gari and Super Farina), and specialty products such as ‘red’ rice.

QUESTION 1.2: WILL LADA INTERVENTIONS LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENTS IN AGRO INPUT SYSTEMS; AND AGGREGATION, PROCESSING, MARKETING, AND AUXILIARY SERVICES? CONSIDER QUANTITY, QUALITY, AND RELEVANCE.

FINDINGS

LADA is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in private sector investment in agro input systems, aggregation, processing, marketing, or auxiliary services. LADA’s focus on training and grant provision in the first half of its implementation has not stimulated private sector investment. This trend is likely to continue unless LADA enhances its activities to better stimulate and facilitate the private sector.

The following are promising areas for private sector investment where LADA technically works:

⁵¹ Gari is a low-cost rice alternative, especially in the hunger season, in Liberia. Gari is a processed form of cassava. See <http://www.cooksinfo.com/gari-cassava>.

⁵² While the quantity of this claim could not be verified, it was consistent with other KII observations.

1. Agro dealers supplying inputs to vegetable and tree crop farmers;
2. Large-scale private rice aggregators/processors (i.e. SADC, AIIC, and Fabrar);
3. Cassava processors (i.e. APROFIN and Falama) supplying Super Gari and Super Farina in snack size packets; and
4. Cocoa export markets.

The following is an examination of investment potential that builds on the support LADA has provided to each of the value chains.

As stated under Evaluation Question 1.1, strong local market demand for local vegetables and fruit (i.e. bitter ball, pepper, cucumber, cabbage, plantain, and banana) is suggested as fetching profitable prices to growers that can stimulate private sector investment. Smallholder and commercial farmers report attractive vegetable markets in Monrovia. The large-scale commercial farm is targeting lower volume, higher quality Monrovia markets. The higher volume, lower quality Red Light open-air market in Monrovia is suggested as more relevant to the capacity of smaller scale farmers. Agro dealers report increasing sales to vegetable farmers and expansions in their retail shop space either by relocating to a larger building or renovating their stores. Agro dealers also express strong interest in renting farm equipment (i.e. power tillers) as they see opportunities for farmer mechanization.

There is evidence of increased investment in Lofa County as a result of large-scale LADA-supported private sector aggregators/processors operating in the county that can be built on in the future. Fieldwork suggests that SADC, AIIC, and Fabrar have stimulated farmers to produce more rice through their commercial actions. Key informants from Meineh Rice Farmers Cooperative reported that many farmers have expanded their fields to take advantage of the market offered by SADC and AIIC. As a result, the cooperative was working to fix their damaged dams. AIIC also offered help to do this. There are nine dams in the area that all require various levels of rehabilitation to make them fully functional.

The two mills that AIIC and SADC plan to install each have the capacity to process 10 MT per day, resulting in upwards of 6,000 MT⁵³ or more of quality milled rice per year, which is only a fraction of the 420,000 MT estimated rice imports into Liberia in 2018.⁵⁴ The relevance of this support to smallholder farmers may become questionable in the longer term if SADC and AIIC no longer buy rice from these producers. SADC and AIIC both have access to large areas of rice growing land, and anecdotal evidence suggests they may consider their own large-scale rice production to reduce average costs and better compete with imported rice.



Figure 3: Milled rice processed by AIIC in Lofa County

Fabrar highlighted two avenues for private sector investment in local rice: (i) selling through retail outlets in small packages of five kg or less, and (ii) the export of niche market ‘red’ rice. Sumo Farms, a large-scale commercial farming company in Bong County, is also seeking to address and invest in ‘red’ rice exports.

LADA rice sector support to cooperatives in Nimba County is unlikely to stimulate private sector investment. LADA has been providing business training to these cooperatives. However, as reported in the Findings Section under Evaluation Question 1, IR 2, it is questionable whether Nimba rice cooperatives

⁵³ Two mills x 10 MT x 300 days.

⁵⁴ <https://www.indexmundi.com/agriculture/?country=lr&commodity=milled-rice&graph=imports>

now have the management capacity or business model to stimulate significant future private sector investment. It is suggested that LADA training has not yet addressed the management capacity and business model need. As an example of the need for a viable business model, cooperatives were not found to have business plans. Two cooperatives – Dokodan and Gbehlay Geh – employed consultants to write project proposals to submit for CIF funding due to low internal capacity.

To compete against imported rice, Liberian producers will need to be cost competitive. Mechanization is one option to reduce production costs. According to several farmers, labor to prepare one acre of lowland for rice cultivation costs approximately \$4,000 LD (\$29 USD), compared to approximately \$1,200 LD (\$8 USD) to rent a power tiller and achieve the same work. An agro dealer in Lofa interested in renting out a tractor said, “*Labor is expensive in rice production,*” and added, “*Laborers are willing to work from noon to three p.m., but a tractor can be utilized all day.*” Larger farmers are more likely to be able to rent or purchase machinery thereby reducing their average per unit production costs. Commercial farmers such as Sumo Farms in Bong County are already moving in this direction.⁵⁵

Interviews highlighted that cassava processors intend to invest in the future of their businesses. These cassava processors are operating on a small scale compared to rice and do not face the same production challenges.⁵⁶ Agapeson in Nimba County, which received a larger mill with LADA support in 2016, plans to expand into a new facility in 2018. They see growing demand for their higher quality products – Super Gari and Super Farina. Similarly, APROFIN in Lofa County, a recipient of a new mill from LADA in 2017, has reinvested increased profits in purchasing larger quantities of raw product and is making facility structural repairs.

Potential exists to increase private sector investment in cocoa that would generate increased smallholder farmer income as explored under Evaluation Question 1.1. International cocoa market prices were attractive in early 2018: “*Cocoa prices hit a new 18-month high in April 2018 on concerns about excess rains in the top producer Ivory Coast.*”⁵⁷ Key informants reported increased buyer activity especially for low quality cocoa. In line with this, cocoa farmers in Lofa were investing in nurseries to increase production.

As described in the findings under Evaluation Question 1.1, significant challenges exist for all investors in smallholder pond-based fish production. Key challenges are in maintaining a seed stock suitable for producing higher price, large fish and obtaining the protein component of feed required for growth. Evaluation fieldwork suggests LADA does not have the capacity or time to successfully address these value chain constraints. It is, however, possible that business investment opportunities exist in other methods of fish production, such as cage fishing. There was no data available during the evaluation to provide further illustrative evidence for this observation.

CONCLUSION

⁵⁵ This does not necessarily mean that smallholder farmers cannot be competitive with imported rice.

⁵⁶ These small-scale cassava processors are seeing modest growth in their businesses that generate between \$200 USD to \$400 USD per month. Cassava operations tend to not have some quality issues that accompany rice, such as stones, and they retail into 1 and 2 kg bags for relatively quick sales. Also, the production of cassava requires minimal inputs, and product loss at harvest is minimal. Rice processors operate on a larger scale and need to attract major buyers. They require more expensive machinery to de-stone. Rice processors need a dependable, steady, and large supply of paddy rice to generate the income to maintain their operations. Obtaining such supplies of paddy rice requires a network of many productive farmers or a large production area. Labor in rice production and harvest is considerably more than that of cassava.

⁵⁷ <https://www.ft.com/content/09f48faa-4246-11e8-803a-295c97e6fd0b>

Continuing LADA interventions in their current form is unlikely to achieve targets for private sector investments in agro input systems, aggregation, processing, marketing, and auxiliary services. Evaluation findings suggest opportunities for private sector investment in LADA-supported value chains. These opportunities enable LADA to build on their successes to date and reduce non-performing activities.

Examples from evaluation fieldwork are:

- Local markets for vegetables: high volume, low quality vegetable markets (i.e. bitter ball, pepper, cabbage, cucumber) are suggested as relevant to smallholder farmers in the short term.
- Export markets for cocoa: high volume, low quality cocoa is suggested as relevant for smallholder farmers.
- Rice import substitution: the 420,000 MT per year imported rice market offers a significant opportunity. The challenge is reducing average production costs to be competitive with imported rice.⁵⁸ In the long term, this opportunity maybe more relevant to large farmers who can achieve lower average costs through economies of scale.
- 'Red rice' for export and lower volume/higher value local markets are relevant for small-scale farmers as producers. This opportunity is relevant for specialist commercial processors and packagers or large-scale farmers in post-harvest sections of the value chain.
- Local markets for cassava to produce higher quality products: Super Gari and Super Farina. Cassava production is relevant for smallholder farmers.

QUESTION 1.2.1: HOW MUCH HAS CREDIT USE INCREASED IN DIFFERENT SEGMENTS OF THE VALUE CHAIN?

FINDINGS

Most increases in credit use are found in association with LADA loan guarantees and are primarily through Afriland Bank.

LADA reported that, at the time of the evaluation, Afriland bank had provided \$675,554 USD of funding to its beneficiaries under loan guarantees. The Development Credit Authority (DCA)⁵⁹ guaranteed most of this funding (\$500,000 USD from DCA and \$175,554 USD from LADA). Liberia Bank of Development and Investment (LBDI) has provided \$125,000 USD, and LEAD has provided \$50,231 USD with LADA loan guarantee support. There is no evidence of LADA increasing or 'crowding in' credit from other lenders into the value chains it supports.

In 2018, LBDI provided a loan to Fabrar to buy equipment. LBDI also granted a letter of credit for Fabrar to purchase rice from the Dokodan Cooperative. LBDI reports that they expect development programs like LADA to support agricultural credit. They are considering establishing an internal LBDI unit focused on providing services to these other development programs.

The loan guarantees are encouraging banks to offer some loans, but there is no evidence to indicate that the terms of these loans are more favorable to the borrower than loans without a LADA guarantee.

LADA's support via LEAD and Afriland Bank has allowed some beneficiaries to obtain loans and establish credit, thereby making future loans more obtainable for those who meet their debt obligations. SADC

⁵⁸ To be competitive with imports, it is estimated that domestic costs would need to fall by approximately 20 percent with imported rice at \$17.50 USD per 25 kg and a break even local processed rice price at approximately \$22 USD per 25 kg,

⁵⁹ <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/economic-growth-and-trade/development-credit-authority-putting-local-wealth-work>

reports that they borrow when necessary and use title to their land or building as collateral. LADA reports facilitating half a million dollars in credit outside the LADA loan guarantee scheme to two of its beneficiaries: Selma Agriculture Development Corporation with \$400,000 USD and Moonlight Metal Works and Garage with \$100,000 USD. Afriland Bank provided these loans with support from USAID's DCA. Other potential borrowers, such as the Welekemei Rural Women's Cooperative, report that they would like to receive a loan but suggest they are not considered credit worthy due to a lack of collateral in the form of land title or building. LADA reported that the reason many beneficiaries, including Welekemei Rural Cooperative, have difficulties in qualifying for a loan is because they do not have sufficient cash flow to generate repayment when due.

There exists a lack of financial products tailored to agriculture and credit remains expensive. Key informant agro dealers and aggregator/processors commonly explained that they are not interested in obtaining a loan because of high interest rates of approximately 33 percent per annum and short payback periods of three to six months. One processor explained that they attempted to obtain a \$50,000 USD loan from Access Bank. They were to be charged a \$5,000 USD (10 percent) processing fee. The interest was 14 percent over a nine-month payback period. After calculating the interest and all fee charges, the total cost of the loan exceeded the principle by 33 percent so the loan offer was declined. An agro dealer/rice farmer in Nimba County stated that agricultural loans should have a 12-month minimum payback period since it can take up to one year to get paid for their rice. He reported that he occasionally borrows up to \$400,000 LD at 25 percent interest with a five-month payback period from a local credit union. An Afriland credit manager explained that banks in Liberia are often unable to offer longer payback periods because the banks receive their funds on short-term contracts. There is demand for credit at all levels of the value chain. A large-scale commercial farmer reported that they would need private or venture capital to expand their operation.

Value chain actors are making various informal credit arrangements to help their business. Some retail agro dealers report that they receive credit from their wholesale suppliers in a "sell pay" arrangement. Payment is made to the wholesale input supplier after the retail agro dealer completes a sale. One agro dealer in Nimba County borrowed \$73,000 LD from a friend at zero percent interest. This agro dealer will issue two or three weeks of credit to customers who are well known and trustworthy. Processors such as WAW in Bong County also provide small loans to farmers when they have sufficient cash flow.

At the community level, Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) exist but do not provide the type of credit necessary to finance businesses.

CONCLUSION

High demand exists for credit at all levels of the value chains, but existing supply falls far short in meeting the demand. However, more use of credit is unlikely to occur under existing loan terms and conditions.

QUESTION 1.3: WHAT ARE THE SUCCESSES, UNINTENDED OUTCOMES AND CHALLENGES?

FINDINGS

Successes

LADA has successfully built a strong working relationship with the MOA. Close coordination has developed a sense of ownership in the Ministry, especially in relation to LADA's alignment with national policies to improve cooperative mechanization through provision of mills, tractors, and cultivation machinery.

Evaluation findings are consistent with LADA's PIDS data. This suggests LADA has successfully built an informative M&E system that reflects performance and should support management decision making.

LADA's support to large-scale private sector rice aggregators/processors in Lofa County has potential to further advance the processing of better quality Liberian rice. LADA's training in business management, customer service/extension, and product usage has led to increased capacity among some agro dealers. Support in the form of new mills to cassava processors provided through LADA co-investments has led to some processors' increasing production and sales.

Unintended Outcomes

LADA has supported the GOL to develop a draft Food Law, draft Codex food standards, and begin reequipping and refurbishing the National Standards Laboratory. This support was unintended at the initiation of LADA. Key informants report that this LADA support came from unplanned meetings with potential international vegetable buyers. The intention of the Food Law, Codex standards, and reequipped Laboratory were to meet international best practices for exporting vegetables supporting international market access.

Challenges

LADA faces notable challenges and key among them as identified from the evaluation fieldwork include a mindset among some farmers and cooperatives that handouts or free distribution is the practical way forward, when in actuality, it 'crowds out' the private sector. It is particularly noticeable for agro dealers striving to sell products to farmers when these buyers expect to get free distributions of inputs from GOL or NGOs. Management capacity and general education levels significantly challenge LADA support to cooperatives.

There are a limited number of entrepreneurs for LADA to engage with, and since LADA only enters into co-investments with organizations that have been established for a minimum of three years, this further reduces the number of potential agribusinesses to support.

The general economic environment with inflation and exchange rate depreciation combined with poor governance is a major challenge.

Many smallholder farmers engaged in subsistence agriculture are reluctant to adopt commercial practices. It is difficult to change long-standing farming practices that have proved resilient during war and disease outbreaks. This challenges initiatives like LADA that try to introduce technology and commercial innovation.

LADA reported that the matching grant obligation for the recipient organization to provide an 'in kind' contribution has raised significant compliance issues with USAID regulations that has slowed down action. Administrative processes and delays in procurement are reported to have led to the delayed arrival of new equipment. This has limited the beneficial influence of LADA distributions on processors and farmers.

CONCLUSION

Successes

LADA has cultivated a strong relationship with GOL, particularly the MOA, and this can be leveraged toward more strategic implementation in the remaining years, as elaborated under Recommendations. LADA's informative M&E system is also an asset available for adaptive performance management.

The success of LADA's work with large-scale private sector rice aggregators/processors in Lofa County serve as a model to advance the processing of better quality Liberian rice. LADA's other successes in strengthening value chain linkages serve as opportunities for emphasized support or replication in the remaining years.

Unintended Outcomes

LADA's ability to adapt to contextually-arising needs through their support to the National Standards Laboratory has proven to be a beneficial step toward alleviating private sector development constraints.

Challenges

The fundamental factors undermining the success of LADA are beneficiary mindsets and the limited number of entrepreneurs and private sector businesses engaged in agriculture. Longstanding subsistence practices, low management capacity, and low education levels further impede adopting commercial practices. These factors are wrapped in a general economic environment of high inflation and exchange rate depreciation combined with poor governance.

QUESTION 1.4: ARE THERE OPPORTUNITIES TO INTEGRATE MORE STIP?

FINDINGS

There are opportunities to integrate more STIP into the LADA program. LADA (and previous USAID activities) have tried to support STIP. Examples include digital financing, SMS messaging, power tillers, cassava processors, and fish feed pellet-making machines. These initiatives have tended to be unsuccessful, as underlying business models have proved unsustainable. With digital financing through LEAD, customers could not convert digital money into cash. SMS messaging has not found an economically viable use for smallholder agriculture. Maintenance of power tillers remains a key challenge. Some cassava processors are being used. Fish feed pelleting machines are reported as low quality and non-functional.

Opportunities exist to learn from experience and retry some of these initiatives. LEAD and the mobile phone company, Orange, report interest in working further in digital financing. Trying this style of innovation is more likely to succeed closer to Monrovia where cash conversion should be easier. Working with agro dealers and processors that have to send and receive cash, as opposed to a cooperative, is also suggested.

Power tillers remain valid technologies where long-term maintenance is a key issue. A potential business model to sustain this technology is to support individual contractors (acting as small businesses that power till fields for other farmers) that own and have a long-term profit incentive to maintain machines. These individuals are likely to be lead farmers in their communities and early adopters of technology. They may farm insufficient areas of land to make purchase of a machine economically viable for themselves. Increasing this area by contracting for others could make the practice viable. Lessons need to be drawn from previous attempts to do this in Liberia as reported by previous USAID and other donor activities. Distributing machines to cooperatives should be avoided, as this type of support has not proven sustainable in the past. For example, power tillers were provided to Dokodan Cooperative in 2009 by WFP. More tillers were then supplied to this cooperative by the USAID Food and Enterprise Development activity. At the time of evaluation fieldwork, Dokodan cooperative management representatives reported the cooperative had no functioning power tillers.

Large-scale farmers and processors are introducing new technology to their businesses. Opportunities exist for LADA to support this and potentially expand benefits to other farmers. SADC is planning to install a color selecting rice grader and sorter to separate different rice varieties. This is intended to allow a homogeneous higher quality rice to be supplied from smallholder farmers. In Bong County, the large scale commercial farm called Sumo Farms is testing many new technologies and innovations, including

Effective Micro-organisms (EM) 1 and 5⁶⁰ from Benin and use of worms in composting. This farmer is also interested in hybrid seed and technology to improve storage of international rice exports. Working together in technological areas of mutual interest presents an opportunity to test and introduce new science that can also be beneficial to LADA's target group.

Smallholder subsistence farming is prevalent in Liberia. Use of commercial agro input technologies in the form of seeds, fertilizers, and chemicals is nascent. Surprisingly, LADA is reported as encouraging use of farmer-saved seed and is not linking agro dealers to farmers in its training activities.⁶¹ Evaluation fieldwork suggests smallholder rice farmers are starting to use herbicides, and the more progressive vegetable farmers are using commercial seed, fertilizer, and insecticides. The low levels of commercial input use suggest significant unexploited opportunities to bring in internationally available technologies such as seeds, fertilizers, and chemicals that can increase STIP and in an environmentally safe manner.

CONCLUSION

Agro inputs, mobile money, mechanization via contractors, and working with large-scale farmers and processors who are bringing in new technology are opportunities for LADA's review and engagement.

QUESTION 1.5: TO WHAT EXTENT IS LADA ADDRESSING GENDER AND YOUTH IN ITS ACTIVITIES?

FINDINGS

Gender

Despite its prominence in the Theory of Change, LADA is addressing gender to a moderate extent in terms of female participation. Gender has mainly been addressed through mainstreaming approaches to training. In these events, women are reported as receiving the same training as men. Trainings do not include components tailored to the barriers women face as actors in the value chain. Without this, women are likely to continue in traditional roles as providers of unskilled labor. In its efforts to emphasize gender, LADA has specific gender targets whereby women should make up at least 30 percent of beneficiaries in training and 25 percent of beneficiaries in CIF. At the end of the first quarter of FY18, LADA reported that 31 percent of women have benefited from CIF grants, and the reported number of beneficiaries trained was not disaggregated by gender. CIF contribution thresholds are reported as lower for women to encourage female participation. Thirty-five percent contribution is required from women, instead of the 50 percent required from men. LADA also includes female agro dealers in its support under IR 1. LADA's work with female agro dealers is reported as the same as their support to other similar male-led businesses.

The aggregate number of male and female LADA beneficiaries is approximately equal. Data presented in Table 6 below shows that 51 percent of the LADA-supported cooperative and association membership is female. However, female LADA beneficiaries are less likely to express a positive change in their lives resulting from the activity's support. As reported earlier under Evaluation Question 1 in Table 4, 70 percent of women reported no change in their lives due to LADA compared to 56 percent of men.

⁶⁰ EM1 helps prevent pests, pathogens, and diseases. EM5 is a non-chemical insect repellent and is non-toxic. EM5 is used to prevent disease and pest problems in crop plants.

⁶¹ There is no seed certification board or certified seed grower in Liberia. In the absence of such quality control, the use of saved seeds by farmers becomes a coping mechanism to address lack of seeds during production periods. LADA promotes this for farmers who do not have the means and access to purchase the full package of improved, preferably certified, seed, and fertilizer. The previous USAID intervention, Food and Enterprise Development, trained lowland and upland rice farmers on how to multiply and produce seeds of improved rice varieties.

TABLE 6: MALE AND FEMALE MEMBERSHIP OF COOPERATIVES, PROCESSORS/AGGREGATORS, AND ASSOCIATIONS SUPPORTED BY LADA

COUNTY	MALE	%	FEMALE	%	TOTAL
Nimba	3,300	34%	6,517	66%	9,817
Lofa	6,260	66%	3,203	34%	9,465
Montserrado	1,875	47%	2,125	53%	4,000
Bong	1,821	51%	1,771	49%	3,592
Total	13,256	49%	13,616	51%	26,874

Source: Evaluation estimates based on LADA data.

LADA is supporting women's cooperatives and groups, and women were seen to be in management positions with regards to finance and decision making in these organizations. Key informants report that LADA support of women's businesses has led to expanding production capacity among several processors through co-investments on milling machinery, such as Falama, and increased knowledge in business management, such as Welekemei Rural Women's Cooperative. One female leader commented, *"If you can't manage your business, it doesn't matter how much product you make."*

Overall, LADA data in Table 7 shows that women are less likely to be in leadership positions in the cooperatives or groups that the activity supports. Approximately 19 percent of the cooperatives and associations that LADA works with are female-led. Female leadership representation is particularly low in Montserrado County.

TABLE 7: MALE AND FEMALE LEADERSHIP OF COOPERATIVES, PROCESSORS/AGGREGATORS, AND ASSOCIATIONS SUPPORTED BY LADA

COUNTY	MALE	%	FEMALE	%	TOTAL
Montserrado	100	86%	16	14%	116
Bong	44	76%	14	24%	58
Nimba	21	72%	8	28%	29
Lofa	15	79%	4	21%	19
Total	180	81%	42	19%	222

Source: Evaluation estimates based on LADA data.

FGDs with farmer groups suggest traditional gender roles and responsibilities are entrenched at the farmer level. Traditionally, women are the main providers of labor, particularly in rice and cassava. Men traditionally have roles operating machinery and managing money. LADA support to rice and cassava processing is likely to stimulate female employment. However, field observation suggests the roles women play in these value chains is largely as providers of unskilled labor.

TABLE 8: MALE AND FEMALE BUSINESS OWNERS OF AGRO DEALERS AND AGRO MACHINE FABRICATORS SUPPORTED BY LADA

COUNTY	MALE	%	FEMALE	%	TOTAL
Montserrado	9	25%	27	75%	36
Bong	13	87%	2	13%	15
Nimba	6	50%	6	50%	12
Lofa	5	100%	0 ⁶²	0%	5

⁶² Fieldwork suggested there were few agro dealers in Lofa County. During fieldwork, no female-owned or operated agro dealers were found in Lofa County.

Total	33	49%	35	51%	68
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Source: Evaluation estimates based on LADA data.

LADA support to women agro dealers in the form of training and loan guarantees has contributed to empowering women in agribusinesses. Key informants report that LADA support of women agro dealers has led to increased knowledge in business management, customer service/extension services, proper application of farm chemicals, and safe chemical storage practices. LADA data shows that overall support to agro dealers is balanced between men and women (Table 8). Women form the majority of agro dealers in Montserrado. In Lofa, no women agro dealers were reported as receiving support.

Youth

LADA is addressing youth⁶³ to a low extent. Young people between the ages of 16 and 35 are employed in some of the businesses supported by LADA. As with gender, LADA has mainly included youth through mainstreaming approaches to training. In its 2017 annual report, LADA reported training 1,817 male and 2,563 female youth in inputs utilization, post-harvest handling and loss prevention, and business management.⁶⁴ Again, it is suggested that youth receive the same training as other participants. Unlike gender, LADA does not include specific youth participation targets in its planning.

LADA has provided limited targeted support to four youth groups. In Bong County, one youth group had been provided with a cassava-processing machine. The machine had become inactive, and LADA decided to take the machine back. In Lofa County, a LADA partner reported delaying plans to work with youth as participants needed to go back to school. Most of these youth were reported as under the age of 18. About three of the groups were aged 18 and above. This example suggests LADA and USAID should ensure youth initiatives do not include children or the use of child labor. In Nimba and Montserrado, evaluation fieldwork suggests support to youth is focused on coaching and training in the focal areas of post-harvest handling and business skills.

LADA field staff reported challenges when registering Youth Groups and generating articles of incorporation. These factors are reported as required by LADA to work with groups. LADA staff members further reported that these requirements act as a barrier to CIFs and distributions specifically targeting youth. As mentioned in the findings under Evaluation Question 1.3, LADA's design decision to not work with start-ups and only work with existing businesses is reported to make engagement with youth difficult.

The LADA Theory of Change emphasizes making agriculture more inclusive and attractive to youth. In addition, USAID Transition Papers⁶⁵ emphasize the importance of Liberia developing short-term and long-term strategies to improve the employability of youth and preparing them to work in progressive sectors. It is suggested that LADA should have a prominent role developing an agricultural sector that is inclusive of young people and contributes to Liberia's youth development strategies. Youth in agriculture is a key development issue, with many lessons learned from previous USAID and other donor activities.

CONCLUSION

Gender

LADA is on track with achieving its results framework targets for gender participation, but gaps exist in fulfilling the Theory of Change to make agriculture more inclusive and attractive to women. Evaluation results show LADA training to female farmers in mixed gender groups has included women, but a lack of tailored training activities is unlikely to result in meaningful change in the lives of women. Current activities

⁶³ Youth are defined in Liberia as people between the age of 16 and 35.

⁶⁴ See LADA FY 17 Annual Report (October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017) Table 6: Training of LADA Beneficiaries.

⁶⁵ http://usaidliberiakmportal.com/resource_library/liberia-development-conference-anthology/

at a field level have been insufficient to change traditional gender roles. Targeted strategies are required to avoid further entrenching roles where women primarily act as providers of unskilled labor.

Youth

LADA does not adequately address youth in its activities considering this age group is also emphasized in the Theory of Change and recent USAID Transition Policy Papers. LADA has included youth in its training and implemented a limited number of specific activities targeting four existing youth groups. LADA procedures requiring it to work with existing groups appear to limit youth-oriented activities.

QUESTION 2: HOW EFFECTIVELY HAS LADA WORKED WITH CARI, MOA, AND MOCI IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT, CAPACITY BUILDING, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES? WHAT ARE THE SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES?

FINDINGS

CARI

Some milestones have been achieved in LADA's capacity building work with CARI, but challenges still remain. LADA commissioned CARI to perform two surveys that were used to inform LADA's activities. CARI also developed training material and acted as trainers for LADA. No evidence was found of LADA working with CARI in policy development. At the time of the evaluation, CARI and LADA did not have any ongoing activities.

To inform its focus on capacity building in post-harvest handling, value addition, extension, processing, and marketing, LADA signed a memorandum of understanding with CARI to perform a survey in four counties in Liberia. The survey focused on post-harvest losses in the cassava, rice, and vegetable value chains and targeted 25 farmers in each of the counties. The results of the surveys have been used for training, extension, and marketing in the targeted areas.

CARI also conducted research on twenty-four varieties of local cassava to identify high yielding and high starch content varieties that can be used for gari, fufu, and starch. The results of the trials were sent to the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) Nigeria for analysis and had not been completed by the evaluation. Farmers in Lofa and other targeted areas are benefitting from new and improved varieties of cassava being distributed by the Smallholder Agricultural Productivity Enhancement and Commercialization project under the auspices of IITA in Nigeria. Farmers in Lofa and Bong have already started to multiply these improved varieties for sale and for planting. Cooperatives in Lofa and Nimba noted that they plant the new and improved varieties introduced by the IITA initiative. They harvest for processing and sell cuttings to other farmers. While this happened without the LADA-supported research, the results may be useful in the future.

CARI has trained agro dealers for LADA. This training may have contributed to the success of some agro dealers described under Evaluation Question 1, IR 1. CARI also trained cooperatives and farmer groups in the use of cassava graters and use of a fish feed pelleting machine. Only two of the 15 pelleting machines are reported as working at the time of evaluation, suggesting this capacity building was not effective.

Evaluation fieldwork suggests there are market opportunities amongst LADA supported groups that have not been effectively explored. CARI conducted the surveys amongst LADA supported enterprises and groups, but little has since been done to link processing groups to markets using the findings. For example, Falama, a LADA beneficiary and 'champion' in the cassava processing industry in Liberia, reported that the company buys farina and gari products for re-packaging and sales. According to the proprietor, the company buys more than one ton of gari every month. The CARI survey has not been used to link LADA supported cassava processing groups to this buyer.

CARI has also done training for LADA participating agro dealers, National Agro Input Dealers Association of Liberia (NAIDAL) and cooperatives involved in rice and cassava processing. Interviews illustrated that agro dealers and processors have gained some knowledge from the training. However, they have not really changed their behavior in addressing issues around the value chains in which they work. Some key informants suggest CARI should act as a trainer of trainers, as opposed to directly providing training. For example, NAIDAL, the nascent umbrella organization composed of agro dealers and supported by LADA to self-regulate the agro dealer industry in Liberia and should spearhead the training of agro dealers. NAIDAL's leadership explained that NAIDAL is not effective due to limited funding and lack of a strategic business plan. They asked for more training and facilitation from CARI to build the organization's capacity to hold trainings and help in the regulation of the industry.

MOA

Overall, LADA's work with MOA in policy development and capacity building has not yet been effective. LADA's activities are strongly aligned with MOA policy, and the MOA plays a strong role at the county level coordinating agricultural support activities and serving as trainers for LADA. Cooperatives can be formed for different purposes. However, the purpose of LADA-formed cooperatives should be to promote private sector investment. Major challenges exist with the viability of the cooperative system emphasized in MOA policy.

LADA reported that the MOA has provided buildings for the SADC and AIIC rice mills in Lofa. LADA further reported that after many difficulties and setbacks, this has contributed to private sector investment in the two rice mills.

LADA's field activities are coordinated with County Agricultural Coordinators. In Bong, LADA's office joins the County Agricultural Coordinator's office. Interviews suggested the MOA has been instrumental in the selection of some LADA beneficiaries, such as the Nimba rice cooperatives. This has contributed to a sense of Ministry ownership observed during evaluation fieldwork. However, it has also led to LADA partnerships with some ineffective organizations that have a long history of mismanagement amid government and NGO support. Having MOA staff serve as trainers has also contributed to a sense of ownership. However, MOA trainers may not always have exposure to best practice, ideas, and information. Being public sector employees, they may be less inclined to support profit-making by private organizations. As a consequence, this approach has limited farmer's exposure to new information, market-oriented ideas, and linkage to the private sector.

MOCI

LADA has not yet worked effectively with MOCI in policy development, capacity building, and other activities. There was limited activity within the National Standards Laboratory at the time of the evaluation. The laboratory was waiting for LADA supported testing equipment that should allow more commodity testing to be performed. Some businesses were still managing to export agricultural produce from Liberia. PATOM Enterprises, a food processor supported by LADA, is exporting dried fruits and vegetables to the United States and Europe without National Standards Laboratory testing. Required documentation is instead obtained from the Ministry of Health.

LADA reported that collaboration with MOCI included the tentative leasing of a vegetable market to the private enterprise Cookshop. This led to a lease contract that was later cancelled. LADA further reported efforts to facilitate the anticipated domiciliation of ECOWAS regulations on fertilizers, seed, and crop protection products and the certification of agro dealers as part of their work with MOCI to improve the enabling environment. These efforts are recognized as long term and were yet to prove effective at the time of the evaluation.

CONCLUSION

Overall, LADA's work with GOL and other development partners has been positive but not yet especially effective. There is potential for future policy and capacity development, particularly through support to food standards and safety. An enhanced National Standards Laboratory, with supporting legislation, should increase Liberian institutional capacity to test agricultural produce improving quality and safety. MOA support to the two Lofa-based rice processors also has potential to be effective.

There is strong coordination and alignment of LADA's activities with MOA, particularly with regard to rice policy supporting smallholder mechanization through cooperatives. MOA staff members have been significant training providers to farmers for LADA. These factors have successfully built GOL ownership of LADA activities, but this has not improved linkage between the private sector and farmers.

QUESTION 3: TO WHAT EXTENT HAS LADA'S APPROACH CONTRIBUTED TO VALUE CHAIN SYSTEMS THAT ARE SUSTAINABLE?

FINDINGS

As LADA does not have value chain-specific strategies, this question considers the sustainability of current and future outputs and outcomes from LADA's support for each commodity. It has worked longest in rice, vegetable, and cassava value chains. LADA started supporting cocoa and aquaculture value chains in the twelve months preceding the performance evaluation. **LADA has attempted to generate sustainable improvements in five value chains by using a combination of training and financial support.**

Rice

LADA's support to the rice value chain has two variants: the Lofa model based on large-scale private sector processors and the Nimba model based on cooperatives. While LADA's approach has contributed modestly to a sustainable rice value chain in Lofa, and not substantially in Nimba, both models face challenges.

In Lofa, key informants report that with the level of support and the market outlet provided by AIIC and SADC, farmers have started to improve their production with the prospect of earning more money from the sale of rice. SADC and AIIC are stockpiling rice for milling and sale on contract to buyers in Monrovia, SADC and AIIC are reported as making efforts to diversify their sales away from NGOs into the main domestic rice markets in Liberia in order to be sustainable. LADA is also reported as facilitating linkages with major wholesale rice dealers in Monrovia to prepare for the incorporation of processed rice from the two enterprises to be sold by the wholesale dealers.

In Nimba, LADA rice support was centered on cooperative farms. The challenges faced by these organizations in production, management, and marketing question sustainability of this component of the rice value chain.

Production: Cooperative farmers' land was often reported as facing challenges of low soil fertility and high levels of iron toxicity. Controlling water levels is also a challenge. Dokodan's damaged canals and embankments mean water levels cannot be controlled. Annual floods are likely to continue depleting soil fertility, reducing incentives for adding fertilizers and lime. Farmers subsistence management techniques using saved seed and limited chemical inputs also challenge production.

Cooperative Management: Nimba rice cooperatives (Gbehlay Geh, Kpodo, and Dokodan) have a long history of receiving free distributions of machinery, equipment, and training from international and national NGOs, with limited results. Interviews with Dokodan's farmers and managers suggest the cooperative management has limited business skills. Management and administration practices are unlikely to develop a sustainable business. All three cooperatives in Nimba report lack of working capital, which questions their ability to pay for essentials such as fuel and repairs, as well as buying rice produced by members.

Cooperatives in Liberia are often unable to properly recycle member funds for investment and have limited success accessing or managing bank loans.

Markets: The Nimba cooperatives are reliant on WFP and Mary's Meals as buyers. These buyers pay an attractive price for rice with quality standards below international equivalents.⁶⁶ Even with such market opportunities, cooperatives struggle to deliver. Kpodo reported 2017 sales of 10 MT. This was part of a 25 MT WFP contract,⁶⁷ of which the cooperative was unable to fulfill 15 MT. This suggests low capacity management that LADA has not yet addressed.

Vegetables

LADA's approach has contributed to sustainable vegetable production and marketing, mainly through its support to agro input providers. All agro dealer respondents in the four counties noted vegetable producers/growers as their main customers. The main items bought by the vegetable producers were Nitrogen-Phosphorus-Potassium (NPK) fertilizer, urea, and herbicides. The production of indigenous vegetables like bitter balls and peppers is reported to have increased supported by a profitable urban market, and gains appear sustainable. On the other hand, free input distributions reduce farmer demand and challenge agro dealer sustainability.

Cassava

Mixed results are found for LADA's support to create a sustainable cassava value chain. Some cassava processors (i.e. APROFIN) report increasing sales following LADA cassava value chain support. Other organizations report losses from cassava processing (i.e. Rise Agriculture).

Targeting the small but growing demand for value-added gari products may offer sustainable market opportunities. Anecdotal evidence suggests more bakeries are buying cassava flour to add to their imported flour. This is consistent with the GOL policy requiring bakeries to include 10 percent cassava flour in locally baked bread. Logan and Logan noted that bread made from 10 percent cassava flour has a very flavorful taste. Some respondents shared that gari serves as an alternative for rice during the lean season, and higher sales volumes are made at this time. Given the mixed results, further evidence is required to determine if LADA's support to the cassava value chain will be sustainable.

Cocoa

LADA started supporting cocoa approximately one year before the evaluation. It has not contributed to any sustainable growth in the cocoa value chain. LADA's approach focuses on training in post-harvest handling to increase income. These trainings are unlikely to sustainably address the challenges faced in the cocoa value chain as described in the Findings Section under Evaluation Question 1.1.

Aquaculture

LADA investments made in the aquaculture value chain to date are not likely to contribute to sustainable systems. Efforts to introduce pelletizing machines did not work. Supply of hybrid fingerlings and sourcing the protein component of improved fish feed challenge LADAs work in this value chain as discussed under Evaluation Question 1. It is unlikely that sustainable value chains can be developed for pond-based smallholder fish farming by LADA considering its capacity and the implementation time remaining.

CONCLUSION

⁶⁶ WFP and Mary's Meals emphasize quality standards. However, their standards are reported as still below those of imported rice. WFP and Mary's Meals often have a contractual obligation or commitment to procure a part of the rice in country.

⁶⁷ Priced at \$750 USD per MT. World market price is \$559 USD per MT at www.indexmundi.com.

LADA has modestly contributed to economically sustainable value chain systems in vegetables and cassava, and to a lesser extent in rice. LADA's support to agro input providers has contributed to modest improvements to the vegetable value chain. LADA's farmer training and loans have encouraged some farmers to increase vegetable production. It is uncertain if these increases will be sustained after LADA phases out. LADA has supported some cassava processors to also increase production.

LADA activities in cocoa and aquaculture are in nascent stages at the time of the midterm evaluation, and these activities have not yet contributed to value chain sustainability. LADA support to the private sector actors in the Lofa rice value chain has contributed to a growing and potentially sustainable rice system. LADA's support to rice cooperatives in the Nimba rice value chain still face significant foundational challenges.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

QUESTION 1: ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES UNDER LADA

To achieve LADA's goal of increasing agricultural incomes of smallholder farmers through increased private sector investment in the Liberian agricultural sector, LADA should review its Theory of Change. To that end, LADA should increase its emphasis on private enterprise investment since support to these businesses is shown to be more effective in increasing farmers' incomes. LADA should reduce its reliance on delivering farmer training and, instead, increase the role of private enterprises, such as agro dealers, in training provision. Moreover, LADA should review its strategy for supporting private sector businesses and cooperatives by shifting from increased production to emphasizing productivity, as stated in its Theory of Change. While LADA has some staff with private enterprise background, in the short term, LADA should review its human resource capacity to ensure it has appropriate levels of private enterprise and business support expertise who also know how to assess grants. It can do this by comparing curricula vitae and staff performance records with roles and responsibility requirements. The 'enterprise reflex' should be emphasized especially at the field level to challenge donor dependency.

IR 1: Increasing Private Sector Investment in Agricultural Input Systems

To increase private sector investment in agricultural input systems LADA should emphasize facilitating the linkage between agro input providers and farmers by:

- Increasing mentoring and facilitation support to interested agro input providers with sufficient capacity in the establishment of demonstration plots to show farmers the benefits of inputs;
- Supporting agro input providers to act as trainers and/or extension agents by building their capacity in product knowledge, health, and safety and linking them to interested farm groups and lead farmers;
- Supporting agro dealers expansion into farm machinery rentals (i.e. power tillers and tractors) by providing business analysis support (i.e. calculating break even cultivation areas, pricing requirements, and advising on access to finance); and
- Providing further support to NAIDAL to advocate for and address the regulation of chemicals to assure quality and reliability. This work should be coordinated with the National Standards Laboratory via sample testing when it is operational.

IR 2: Increasing Private Sector Investment in Post-Harvest Handling

As part of the general recommendation to increase support to the Private Sector investment, LADA should consider the following:

- Support private enterprise aggregator pre-financing and contract farming models and replicate the Lofa private enterprise rice processor model where possible.
- Improve services supporting access to finance.

- Together with USAID, review and improve due diligence processes for CIF grants and loans to MSMEs provided under IR 2 to increase the effectiveness of grants and reduce levels of non-performing debt.
- Ensure cooperatives have the appropriate capacity to manage grants and/or assets for the benefit of their members before facilitating these types of support.

Improve BDS

- LADA should increase its capacity in business analysis. This includes net and gross margin analysis, periodic budgeting (i.e. monthly, yearly budgets), cash flow forecasts, investment analysis (i.e. payback periods, discounted cash flows, internal rates of return), and scenario planning and budgeting.
- LADA should move away from being a trainer to being a business advisor, mentor, and facilitator identifying and analyzing businesses and business opportunities, building linkages, and bringing in ideas and expertise. An example of linkage would be for APROFIN and the Voinjama District Women's Cooperative in Lofa to be connected with Falama Incorporated in Monrovia for the benefit of both parties to increase their sales.
- Any LADA training should emphasize behavioral change that follows knowledge acquisition. Any future training should clearly contribute to private sector investment that will increase income.
- Trainings should be followed-up by mentoring visits to check for and support behavioral change.

IR 3: Strengthening Investment Facilitation, Market Information, Advocacy, and Support Systems

To effectively establish AIN and revitalize market information services/digital finance, LADA and BSC need to prioritize the development of AIN if it is to remain central to the activity's sustainability strategy. LADA should ensure that AIN members receive services for which they are willing to pay registration and annual membership fees that can sustain the organization. LADA should calculate how many members are needed and what the annual membership fee should be to achieve this, and these figures should be shared and verified with USAID to ensure viability. If AIN is considered viable, LADA should accelerate target dates for established local AIN networks. LADA and BSC should perform additional AIN marketing and investment forums in the four target counties to attract members through increased exposure and showing the value of the organization through hosting information events.

LADA should renew discussions with Orange Mobile (and other potential service providers) to identify and implement Internet/mobile phone-based approaches to providing Business, Finance, and Market Information Services. CNFA should fund an International Short-Term Technical Advisory study to identify and incorporate innovative market information services and digital finance approaches into LADA.

QUESTION 1.1: INCREASING SMALLHOLDER FARMER INCOMES

While the evaluation recognizes that the rice sector has an important food security role, to more effectively increase smallholder farmer's income, LADA should focus on vegetables (fresh, processed), cassava (processed into gari, Super Gari, Super Farina), and cocoa as these value chains offer the strongest market potential to increase income. Since markets are fluid, LADA should update its knowledge of market opportunities in target value chains. LADA should also monitor how changes in the Liberian economic context are affecting these opportunities. LADA should develop viable strategies with appropriate objectives, targets, and indicators to improve value chains. While LADA itself should have a greater private enterprise focus, actors such as GOL, other donors, and NGOs can play a significant partner role in achieving objectives.

QUESTION 1.2: INCREASING PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT

LADA should enhance its role as a private sector facilitator – as opposed to a trainer – in entrepreneurial support, business mentoring, and linkage. Support will need to be tailored to specific opportunities with profit potential. For example, cassava processing to develop retail options where local products called 'walking eating' could be sold in bars rather than in current powder form. Another example is providing

specialist technical input to assist Lofa private sector rice processors to supply Liberian retail markets directly competing with imports. LADA needs to develop profitable business ideas that other investors see and copy to ‘crowd in’ the private sector.

CNFA needs to add private sector thinking to LADA. At a field level, staff members need to be able to engage with entrepreneurs and early adopters and ‘think like a business.’ CNFA should bring in more people with business and private enterprise experience. LADA should also aim to partner more with the private enterprise. For example, CNFA should look for international private sector partners, particularly among the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in input supply and export of specialty products such as ‘red rice.’

QUESTION 1.2.1: IMPROVING CREDIT USE

To increase credit use in different segments of the value chain, LADA should enhance its services in access to finance and BDS. Short-term international technical expertise should be employed to explore opportunities and detail a way forward. Coverage should include review working more with commercial banks to develop loan products tailored to agriculture.

LADA should also promote responsible lending that is based on sound business analysis. Evaluation fieldwork interviews indicate that credit involving LADA loan guarantees are being administered to beneficiaries whose weak financial positions lead to an inability to repay. LADA and USAID should also review their due diligence of lending and grant giving processes. LADA has strict criteria for loans and grants. To avoid distributing grants to cooperatives that have a history of underperformance and to improve grant beneficiary and loan recipient selection processes, LADA should improve application of the criteria by strengthening its business analysis capacity.

In addition, as the CIF completes, LADA should move to facilitating finance, working increasingly with AIN to ‘find good business ideas that are fundable.’

QUESTION 1.3: BUILDING ON SUCCESSES, UNINTENDED OUTCOMES, AND ADDRESSING CHALLENGES

LADA and USAID should operationalize the good will they have generated with the GOL to allow LADA to focus on supporting private enterprise in agriculture. LADA and USAID should also lobby the GOL to reduce market-distorting practices such as fertilizer distributions that ‘crowd out’ the private sector and to provide policy support to enhance agricultural credit.

LADA should continue its support to the National Standards Laboratory by continuing to support construction and instillation. It should also follow up to ensure the necessary drafted support policies and guidelines are effectively written and fully enacted by the GOL.

LADA should target entrepreneurs such as business-minded youth in colleges and business-minded lead farmers and work with them to grow businesses. LADA will have to increase its own proactive networking to engage more with entrepreneurs through the BSC and other gatherings of commerce and business representatives (i.e. Rotary Clubs and Chambers of Commerce).

QUESTION 1.4: OPPORTUNITIES FOR MORE STIP

STIP opportunities exist in agro inputs, mobile money, mechanization via contractors, and working with large-scale farmers and processors who are bringing in new technology (i.e. Sumo Farms).

When exploring STIP, LADA should emphasize working with interested private sector businesses that are already exploring the area. Experience with digital financing also shows testing new technologies is better done first in easier-to-reach locations close to Monrovia.

QUESTION 1.5: ADDRESSING GENDER AND YOUTH

LADA needs to give increased focus to gender and youth in line with its Theory of Change to “*make agriculture a more inclusive, attractive vocation, particularly to youth and women.*”

To do this, LADA should develop more targeted gender and youth interventions.⁶⁸ LADA should determine how best to bring expertise and ideas on how women can be engaged beyond labor in the Liberian context of low female literacy levels and the strong traditional gender roles.

LADA also needs to target young entrepreneurs by proactively seeking them. LADA should hold introductory meetings in colleges, universities, and business schools to discuss business ideas and opportunities. Competitions or workshop events could explore joint analysis, identify ideas, and look for ways of taking ideas forward. Another possible synergy includes the agricultural Center of Excellence that USAID established at Cuttington University through the Excellence in Higher Education for Liberian Development activity. Recent graduates, especially females, serve as a suitable cohort of agribusiness entrepreneurs. CNFA will need to ensure that LADA has the required expertise to do this. LADA should review and remove any internal policies or procedures that prevent it working with youth. Examples include working with new enterprises that may have less than three years of experience. LADA should ensure school children are not used as ‘volunteers’ in youth activities. Youth is a prominent development issue in agriculture with significant donor investment. USAID and LADA should review latest experience to absorb lessons into LADA.

QUESTION 2: WORKING WITH CARI, MOA, AND MOCI

LADA should work with MOA and MOCI to develop policies that move away from subsidies and handouts and move toward commercialization of the input sector. This includes developing policies for agricultural credit. The Draft Pesticide, Seed, and Fertilizers Act pending approval by legislature should also be leveraged against these goals. LADA should work more with private sector groups to effect change through training and extension. For example, NAIDAL should arrange regular trainings, certifications, and registration for its members.

In Lofa, SADC and AIIC are both uniquely placed to provide a variety of services in post-harvest activities in rice production. AIIC and SADC currently purchase rice from farmers that are cooperative members. To build farmer capacity, CARI should act as a ‘trainer of trainers’ with AIIC and SADC staff so that company employees can then act as onward trainers for cooperatives or farmer groups. This training should focus on improving production of clean rice that is important to help the processors compete with imported rice in the Liberian market.

In Nimba, LADA could use emerging partners such as Logan and Logan⁶⁹ as trainers for new entrants and other value chain actors. Input providers and private sector processors should be used more as trainers.

QUESTION 3: SUSTAINABLE VALUE CHAINS

In line with the above recommendations, a focus on mentorship and facilitation in the private sector will support the sustainability of value chains as well. To operationalize this, the following recommendations are made for each value chain.

⁶⁸ These include LADA proposals to concentrate on coaching women-owned enterprises and the stimulation of leadership roles for women in supported aggregation-and-distribution clusters.

⁶⁹ Logan and Logan noted that it trained more than 15 women in processing in preparation for its new facility. The enterprise conducted the training on its own, but it had also received training from LADA and the MOA in business development and post-harvest technologies and processing.

Rice

LADA should replicate the Lofa rice private enterprise value chain model where possible as it offers the best option for improving smallholder rice farmer incomes. LADA should provide mentoring support to AIIIC and SADC and help them compete against imports and supply the national market.

Support to Nimba rice cooperatives will require long-term embedded technical support in the following areas:

Production: With the cooperatives, LADA (and/or its partners, MOA/CARI) will need to ensure swampland water levels can be managed to control soil fertility, pH, and iron toxicity to increase productivity. Following this, LADA (and/or its partners, MOA/CARI) will need to address the use of commercial seed, fertilizer, and chemicals with the cooperatives to again increase productivity.

Management: LADA will need to strengthen cooperatives' management to ensure members benefit and assets are distributed fairly. Cooperative will need to have the management capacity to meet contractual arrangements at sustainable, profitable prices. This will require intensive management support as cooperatives have a long history of underperformance.

LADA should review the cooperatives' abilities to finance their operations. This will require strengthening sustainable business models, financial management and accountancy, finding ways of increasing member's annual contribution, and developing linkage to commercial finance.

Markets: LADA will need to develop Nimba cooperative market linkage to buyers and diversify away from NGO buyers. Demand clarity is required in terms of who buyers are, how much rice they want to buy, at what quality, and at what price.

The above will require extensive training on capacity building and potentially change the business models to ensure members benefit according to their individual business relationship with their cooperative.

Cocoa

CNFA should undertake a detailed analysis of the cocoa value chain. Performance evaluation results suggest markets are changing with opportunities for low quality, high volume cocoa and higher quality value addition processing (i.e. powders, butters). A more detailed study is required to validate these opportunities and tailor support to best address them. Evaluation fieldwork suggests LADA should not be involved in cocoa quality training as there have been and remain other NGOs working in this area.

Vegetables

LADA should use the opportunities to strengthen agro input providers linkage to vegetable growers as described in recommendations under IR 1. LADA should review and confirm vegetable and fruit export opportunities. African food stores in Liberian diaspora communities are potential buyers of dried, processed indigenous vegetables and fruits.

Cassava

LADA should build on the cassava value chain success stories with opportunities suggested in linking gari and flour processors to bakeries, packagers, and retailers and Super Gari producers in Monrovia.

Aquaculture

LADA should not continue its general support to pond-based fish farming as significant expertise and time is required to address challenges in production. It is recommended that LADA limit its aquaculture support to grant provision in the remaining CIF round to innovative business opportunities with reliable evidence of a strong chance of success.

VI. UTILIZATION PLAN

The evaluation strongly recommends that a joint review meeting for LADA and USAID should be held to agree on next steps based on the recommendations put forward in this evaluation report. This meeting should be used to determine a way forward with the MOA and MOCI. The relationship with the MOA will need to be carefully managed as the performance evaluation suggests tailoring their role in LADA.

LSA plans to facilitate a learning event between one to three months after submission of the final evaluation report with USAID, LADA, and other stakeholders. This will provide an opportunity to apply findings and lessons learned directly to relevant decision making, including policy development, and larger sectoral assessment needs. The workshop will be a one-day session with the aim of ensuring that the findings of the performance evaluation are being used.⁷⁰

One or more additional learning events should be considered by USAID and LADA, to explore how the role of the private sector can be enhanced in the activity and linkages to entrepreneurs can be developed.

LADA should also be encouraged to transfer activity learning through events with the BSC and other bodies where the private sector participates.

⁷⁰ LSA facilitated a learning event for USAID, LADA, GOL, private sector actors, and other donors and stakeholders on November 7, 2018. This event created an opportunity to discuss synergies between agriculture and the private sector, what interventions are working, identify joint priorities, and how actors can better collaborate. This resulted in Action Plans included in Annex H.

ANNEX A: FULL LISTING OF REFERENCES AND REPORT UTILIZED

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ANNEX B: FULL LISTING OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

The full listing of persons interviewed was submitted separately in line with data de-identification policies. Please contact Carla Trippe, ctrippe@socialimpact.com, to request the data.

ANNEX C: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

All these semi-structured interview questions can either be used with individual respondents or for a group interview with several similar types of respondents.

Consent Statement

Thank you for meeting with us. [Introductions] We are from Social Impact, an independent firm that is conducting a study for USAID on LADA. As part of this work, Social Impact is conducting an evaluation of LADA to learn more about its progress. Our team will be speaking with many individuals as part of the evaluation. We asked to meet with you because we are looking to understand your experiences with LADA about how LADA has or has not helped and how LADA can be improved. You have been selected for this interview because you are currently participating in xx / knowledgeable about xx. In total, our evaluation will involve speaking with approximately xx other people who are involved / knowledgeable about xx.

Your participation is voluntary, and you are entitled to decline to participate at any point during the discussion, or at all.

For reports we write on this study, your answers will be combined with those of other people and presented in a summary format. We will be sharing the report with USAID and xx. Your comments will not be attached to your name, so your responses will be anonymous although I will be taking notes so that I can remember later what you tell us. Any information you provide that might identify you will be kept confidential to the fullest extent under local law and U.S. Government policy.

You should also feel comfortable asking any questions at any time during the conversation. There is no payment or direct benefit to you for participating in this interview. There are no specific foreseeable benefits associated with participating in this interview. What you tell us will be used to better understand the results of the xx in this area, and to improve the xx program, so we hope you can be honest with us in your responses. We do not foresee any discomfort and risks associated with participation.

We expect this will take 1 hour. Do you have any questions before we begin?

By saying “yes,” and participating in this evaluation, you are indicating that you have heard this consent script, had an opportunity to ask any questions about your participation and voluntarily consent to participate.

Will you participate in this research study? You may answer yes or no. [Note: consent will be obtained orally]

- Yes, I am willing to participate
- No, I am not willing to participate

FGD Protocol

Consent Statement

Thank you for meeting with us. [Introductions] We are from Social Impact, an independent firm that is conducting a study for LADA on USAID. As part of this work, Social Impact is conducting an evaluation of LAD to learn more about its performance. We asked to meet with you because we are looking to understand your experiences with xx about how the xx has or has not helped and how xx can be improved. You have been selected for xx because you are currently participating in xx / knowledgeable about xx. In total, our evaluation will involve speaking with approximately xx other people who are involved / knowledgeable about xx.

Your participation is voluntary, and you are entitled to decline to participate at any point during the discussion, or at all.

We would like to discuss your experiences related to the xx program. We hope to hear from all of you, as each of your perspectives are highly valued. We will both ask questions of the group, and one of us will take notes based on what you say.

For reports we write on this study, your answers will be combined with those of other people and presented in a summary format. We will be sharing the report with USAID and xx. Your comments will not be attached to your name, so your responses will be anonymous although I will be taking notes so that I can remember later what you tell us. Any information you provide that might identify you will be kept confidential to the fullest extent under local law and U.S. Government policy.

You should also feel comfortable asking any questions at any time during the conversation. There is no payment or direct benefit to you for participating in this interview. There are no specific foreseeable benefits associated with participating in this interview. What you tell us will be used to better understand the results of the xx in this area, and to improve the xx program, so we hope you can be honest with us in your responses. We do not foresee any discomfort and risks associated with participation. We ask that all focus group participants agree not to share anything that is discussed with anyone outside of this group once this conversation ends.

We would like to recommend some ground rules for our discussion.

1. This conversation should be treated as confidential. Whatever is discussed here should not be shared outside of this group after the discussion has finished. Nonetheless, there is a risk that some discussion participants could repeat what is shared here today.
2. Please respect each other's opinions.
3. There is no right or wrong answer. Feel free to express what you feel.
4. The information you provide will not be linked to you in any way. Your honest responses to our questions will be highly appreciated.

We expect this will take at least an hour but less than two. **Do you have any questions about the evaluation or this meeting before we begin?** Address any questions.

Will you participate in this study? By saying “yes” and participating in this evaluation, you are indicating that you have heard or read this consent script, had an opportunity to ask any questions about your participation, and voluntarily consent to participate.

District:	Village:
Number of informants:	
Sex (M/F):	
Age: Are you between the age of 16 and 35? Y/N	
Interviewer:	
Note taker:	
Interpreter:	
Date:	
Location:	

Interview Checklist (Agric Input Systems)

Respondents: Agro input suppliers or those with strong knowledge of the sector (i.e. extensionists/researchers working in agric). Questions are written assuming the interviewee is an agro input supplier. The interviewer will need to adjust the phrasing of questions if the interviewee is an observer with strong knowledge of the sector.

Result Frame Component	Questions
IR 1 Private Sector Investment (Ag Inputs Systems)	<p>Is your business investing more in farm inputs?</p> <p>If yes, which ones?</p> <p>Approx. what percentage change has there been in these investments since this time last year?</p> <p>Why are you investing more in these types of inputs?</p> <p>If no, why is your business not changing its investments or why is it investing less?</p> <p>Are other agro input suppliers also investing more in their business?</p> <p>If yes, which inputs are they investing in and why?</p>
EQ 1.2	Do you expect to invest more in future? What? Where? Why?
Sub IR 1.1 Demand for Agro Inputs	<p>Is there any change in demand for agro inputs?</p> <p>During the past year have you sold more, less, or the about the same amount of inputs?</p> <p>How much of your inputs are sold at government subsidized prices?</p> <p>Can you give some examples of the type of farmers that buy your inputs? What crops do they produce? Who do they sell to? Where do they market their crops?</p> <p>Approx. what percentage change has there been since this time last year? How have your sales changed during the past year?</p> <p>If yes, what is causing this change?</p> <p>What types of inputs are in higher demand?</p> <p>How much has demand changed for these inputs compared to last year?</p> <p>If no, why is demand the same or falling?</p>
Sub IR 1.2 Capacity of Agro Input Dealers	<p>Has the capacity of agro input dealers changed in the last year?</p> <p>What has changed in your business that has either helped or hurt your ability to be successful?</p> <p>If yes, how has it changed and why?</p>
Sub IR 2.1 Access to Finance and BDS Plus EQ 1.2.3	<p>Is your business borrowing more money than at the same time last year? (Be clear on source of loans: Eg; borrowing more money from “banks” “cooperatives” “wholesale suppliers”) Have you borrowed any money for your business in the past year? Do have any challenges when trying to borrow money? Who do you borrow money from for your business?</p>

	<p>If yes, why is it borrowing more?</p> <p>Has this increased finance changed the business?</p> <p>If yes, how?</p> <p>Are other similar businesses borrowing more money?</p> <p>If yes, how is it changing these businesses?</p> <p>Does your business receive /use any BDS services? Have you received any business training in the past year?</p> <p>What are these? How are they helping the business?</p>
EQ 3	<p>Are the changes we have talked about sustainable? Why?</p> <p>Are the changes we have talked about likely to help your business for many years in the future?</p> <p>How do you expect these changes to help your business?</p>
General Questions	<p>Have you received support from LADA?</p> <p>What support have you received?</p> <p>Are you optimistic, pessimistic, or indifferent about the future of your business? Why?</p>
Understanding the Value Chain	<p>What are your sources for inputs?</p> <p>How to you receive your inputs?</p> <p>Are there any challenges obtaining sufficient inputs?</p> <p>Has your supply of inputs increase, decreased, or remained about the same during the past year?</p>

Interview Checklist (Post Harvest and Support Services)

Respondents: Businesses in Post Harvest Handling (PHH), Support Services or those with strong knowledge of the sector. Questions are written assuming the interviewee is representing a business. The interviewer will need to adjust the phrasing of questions if the interviewee is an observer with strong knowledge of the sector.

General Question	What does your business do? (describe the business)
IR 2 Private Sector Investment (PHH)	<p>Is your business investing more in its activities (i.e. PHH, storage, transport, marketing, other)?</p> <p>If yes, what are you investing in? What are you spending more on?</p> <p>Approx. what percentage change has there been in these investments since this time last year? Approximately how much more have you spent during the past year than the year before?</p> <p>Why are you investing more in these activities?</p> <p>If no, why is your business not changing its investments or why is it investing less?</p> <p>Are other similar businesses also investing more in their activities?</p> <p>If yes, which activities are they investing in and why?</p>
EQ 1.2	Do you expect to invest more in future?
<p>Sub IR 2.1 Access to Finance and BDS</p> <p>Plus EQ 1.2.3</p>	<p>Is your business borrowing more money than at the same time last year? (Be clear on source of loans: Eg; borrowing more money from “banks” “cooperatives” “wholesale suppliers”) Have you borrowed any money for your business in the past year?</p> <p>If yes, why is it borrowing more?</p> <p>Has this increased finance changed the business?</p> <p>If yes, how?</p> <p>Do have any challenges when trying to borrow money?</p> <p>Who do you borrow money from for your business?</p>

	<p>Are other similar businesses borrowing more money?</p> <p>If yes, how is it changing these businesses?</p> <p>Does your business use any BDS services? Have you received any business training in the past year?</p> <p>What are these? How are they helping the business?</p>
Sub IR 2.2 Knowledge of PHH Practices	<p>Has your knowledge of PHH practices changed since this time last year?</p> <p>How has your knowledge changed? / What have you learned?</p> <p>What was the source of this learning? Who taught you?</p> <p>How has the extra knowledge changed your business?</p>
EQ 3	<p>Are the changes we have talked about sustainable? Why? Do you expect to benefit from these changes for many years into the future?</p> <p>How do you expect to benefit in future? Are you optimistic, pessimistic, or indifferent about the future of your business? Why?</p>
General Questions	<p>Have you received support from LADA?</p> <p>What support have you received?</p>

Interview Checklist (Investment Facilitation)

Respondents: Businesses involved in investment facilitation, MIS, advocacy, Digital Finance, Agribusiness Investment Network (AIN) or those with strong knowledge of the sector. Questions are written assuming the interviewee is representing a business. The interviewer will need to adjust the phrasing of questions if the interviewee is an observer with strong knowledge of the sector.

General Question	What does your business do? (Describe the business)
IR 3 Facilitation of Investment, MIS, Advocacy and Support Services	<p>What has changed in the area of business facilitation since this time last year?</p> <p>Please describe any change.</p> <p>What are the main contributors to the change? How have they contributed?</p>
Sub IR 3.1 Market Info and Digital Financial Services	<p>What has changed in the area of market information since this time last year?</p> <p>Please describe any change.</p> <p>Are people / businesses using more market information?</p> <p>If yes, which type of businesses and what types of market information are they using?</p> <p>What has changed in the area of Digital Financial Services since this time last year?</p> <p>Please describe any change.</p> <p>Are people / businesses using more Digital Financial Services?</p> <p>If yes, which type of businesses and what types of Digital Financial Services are they using?</p> <p>Is this change in capacity sustainable? Why?</p>
EQ 3	
Sub IR 3.2 AIN capacity	<p>How has AIN capacity changed since this time last year?</p> <p>Who has supported this change in capacity?</p> <p>How is AIN using any change in its capacity?</p> <p>Is this change in capacity sustainable? Why?</p>
EQ 3	
General Questions	<p>Have you received support from LADA?</p> <p>What support have you received?</p> <p>Have you received any non-financial business support in the past year? Please describe this support?</p>

Interview Checklist (Catch All – Ensure coverage of all Evaluation Questions)

Respondents: Knowledgeable individuals / groups in areas of LADAS work with the CARI, MOA, MOCI, STIP and unintended outcomes, challenges. The interviewer will need to adjust the phrasing of questions depending on the interviewee's knowledge of the sector. If relevant add gender, youth and sustainability questions.

General Question	Please describe your interaction with LADA and how you know about the program.
EQ 5 LADAs work with the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI), Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), and Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) in policy development, capacity building, and other activities? What are the successes and challenges?	<p>How does LADA work with CARI, MOA, MOCI?</p> <p>What is changing as a result of LADAs work with these bodies? Probe.</p> <p>What challenges is LADA facing in its work with these bodies?</p> <p>Has LADA provided any training to these bodies?</p> <p>If yes, what changes have happened as a result of this training?</p>
EQ 1.3 What are the successes, unintended outcomes, and challenges?	<p>What are the main LADA successes? Discuss.</p> <p>Does LADA have any unintended outcomes? Discuss.</p> <p>What key challenges does LADA face? Discuss.</p>
EQ 1.4 Are there opportunities to integrate more STIP?	<p>Describe / clarify STIPs</p> <p>Are there opportunities to integrate more STIP into LADA?</p> <p>What are these? Probe, Discuss strengths, weaknesses, any special requirements?</p>
General Questions	<p>Have you received support from LADA?</p> <p>What support have you received?</p>

Participatory Focus Discussion Guide

Most Significant Change Group Interview / Focus Group Discussion

Respondents: This exercise is performed with groups of six farmers? (3 men, 3 women)

Aims: To share deep and honest stories from LADA experience. To collect the stories for the evaluation process.

Facilitator goals: To establish clarity for participants about the aims and consequences of participating in the exercise. To establish and maintain a safe and trusting environment for people to share their stories and listen to one another. To help ensure the stories and storytellers are given equal attention, and manage any pressure people feel to share.

Venue: A neutral space where participants will feel comfortable and undisturbed.

Equipment: Materials: Chairs or mats for everyone to sit in a circle.

Time needed: 1.5 to 2 hrs. It is important to allow enough time to complete the process all in one go, within a relaxed atmosphere.

1. Participants, facilitator, translator and scribe sit in a circle.
2. Explain the aims, the process, and how much time there is for storytelling.
3. Explain that each person will tell their story, and the person to their left is their 'listener', which means they must listen extra carefully to help recap the details of the story later, to aid understanding and later story selection.
4. Explain the role of the 'scribe', who will note down the stories to be included in a report for the organization.
5. Present the Most Significant Change question (see next page).
6. Hold a brief discussion to define the terms and check the question makes sense and that every one is comfortable with the proposed exercise.
7. Allow participants to reflect for a few minutes before telling their stories.
8. Ask for a volunteer to start or invite someone to start the storytelling.
9. Each participant shares a personal story of change. Take turns in any particular order, or go one-by-one around the circle. Ensure the 'listener' understands the story they have to listen too.
10. After each person has told their story, the facilitator invites the 'listener' to repeat the story they listened to.
11. Other participants are invited to respond, comment and/or ask questions for clarification. The facilitator can also ask follow-up questions if necessary to ensure the story is clear and consistent with the group's experiences of the project and what happened in their community.
12. Thank everyone for sharing his or her stories

Interviews will follow all appropriate Social Impact consent, confidentiality and complaint procedures (see above).

Main question

'What has been the most significant change achieved by the LADA program or the activity components that you know?'

Supporting / Guiding Questions

What happened? Please share your story, giving as much rich detail as you can. Try to include:

- . What happened? What was your situation at the start?
- . When and where did it happen? What steps did the project take?
- . What was the outcome?

- . How did you and your family experience change?
- . Who else was involved, and how did they play a part?
- . What was it about the LADA project that made this possible?

Make good notes about this story as you hear your partner talking. Record exact words and phrases as you capture their rich stories.

Tips for appreciative conversations

- . Help your conversation partner to stay in ‘storytelling mode’ and to avoid explaining or analyzing things;
- . Listen for great quotes, images and phrases and make a note of them in your partner’s workbook;
- . Be really curious and interested in what they have to say;
- . Help them tell concrete stories about real people and events;
- . Give space for thinking – allow silence while the interviewee works on their answers;
- . Let them lead with their ideas;
- . Listen to them – rather than thinking about your own answers to the questions, or telling your own stories.

ANNEX D: EVALUATION METHODS

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Document Review

During the first week of the evaluation, the team conducted a thorough review of background documents related to LADA, including periodic program reports, contractual documents, research studies, and other relevant documents to contextualize the research. These documents enabled the team to gain a deeper understanding of the LADA's operations to date, to establish the evaluation design and data collection tools, and to inform the overall assessment process. A full list of documents is provided in Annex A.

FIELD WORK

After the background review phase, the team spent four weeks in the field conducting site visits and collecting qualitative data in order to gain a deeper understanding of LADA, the experiences of its direct beneficiaries, and the local implementation environment. During this time, the evaluation team visited LADA sites, which were selected in four counties in which the activity is implemented, and included urban, peri urban and rural locations.

The sites visited by the evaluation team were selected through purposive sampling from a full list of all locations within the four target counties. The following criteria were used when selecting sites:

- Coverage of five value chains;
- Gender balance;
- Relative importance to LADA (businesses receiving larger grants will be prioritized); and
- Clustering of interviewees (to reduce travel time and increase the time the evaluation team spends in interviews).

TABLE 10: FIELD SITES VISITED

COUNTY	SITE
Montserrado	Kerrysburg
	Fendell
Nimba	Kpein
	Gbelaygeh Women's Cooperative
Bong	Kwapar Ger Cooperative
	Gbondo
Lofa	David Selma Town
	Sebehill
	Foya

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

During the site visits, the evaluation team conducted a wide range of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with LADA beneficiaries, including cooperatives, associations, farmer groups, processors, aggregators and commercial farmers. In addition, the evaluation team conducted extensive interviews with LADA program staff and partner organizations, representatives of the Liberian Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI), Ministry of Health (MOH) and USAID officers. These interviews were

guided by semi-structured interview protocols that identified the key evaluation questions that needed to be answered through the interview. These semi-structured guides also identified probes to follow up on information related to key questions, in order to allow flexibility in the discussion and a natural flow to the conversation, while still allowing the evaluation team to follow up on any points of particular interest to the research questions.

Overall, respondents associated with a LADA supported business were selected and identified based on their seniority and affiliation with the business.

Table 11 below details the number of KIIs undertaken by stakeholder type.

TABLE 11: NUMBER OF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS TARGETED AND REACHED

RESPONDENT TYPE	TOTAL TARGETED	TOTAL COMPLETED
CNFA Staff	9	10
CNFA Partners	17	11
GOL	11	8
Other Relevant Donor Programs	2	1
Agro Dealers	12	13
Aggregators, Processors, Cooperatives	20	20
Cross-cutting Value Chain Actors	6	16
Total	77	79

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

The evaluation team also conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) with farmers and LADA county staff members. Focus group discussions with farmers focused on Evaluation Question 1 and used a most significant change approach. The decision to apply focus groups for select communities was made in order to accommodate the voices of farmers. FGDs with LADA county staff members used a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) approach to explore LADA performance and future potentials. The exercise was used specifically to address Evaluation Question 1.3. Table 12 below lists the respondent groups that participated in focus groups, along with the original target and the completed sample size per respondent category.

TABLE 12: NUMBER OF FOCUS GROUPS TARGETED AND REACHED

RESPONDENT GROUP	TOTAL TARGETED	TOTAL COMPLETED
Farmers	8	9
LADA Staff	4	3

Data Analysis and Reporting

Data collected during the KIIs and FGDs were captured in note form, typed up and circulated to the other team members for additional inputs. These final versions were analyzed using an iterative approach, gathering data and then holding regular evaluation team discussions to identify and debate themes and

patterns within the data. This process informed initial development of key findings, conclusions and recommendations that make up the bulk of this report. From there, the evaluation team members worked individually to analyze qualitative data to develop themes and patterns into main categories that enabled a systematic analysis of all data. This process includes review, cross checking and triangulation of available quantitative data, such as internal LADA PIDS information. Finally, these processes culminated in the development of this performance evaluation report.

ANNEX E: EVALUATION STATEMENT OF WORK

USAID/LIBERIA LIBERIA AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

MIDTERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

STATEMENT OF WORK

I. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

This external evaluation is to be conducted at the mid-point of the Liberia Agribusiness Development Activity (LADA). The mid-term evaluation objectives are to assess the performance of the LADA activity over the last two and half years to help determine what activities are working well and why, which activities are not working and why, and to make modifications and corrections in LADA's implementation over the next two and a half years. The evaluation should provide important information including statistics, findings and recommendations that will assist LADA and its implementing partner CNFA, the Ministry of Agriculture, and USAID to learn what has been accomplished programmatically and administratively and what relevant actions need to be taken to improve the effectiveness of LADA interventions. The information will be shared with the various stakeholders engaged in the agricultural sector including USAID, implementing partner, Government of Liberia, private sector stakeholders such as processors and financial institutions providing access to finance in agribusiness, and other key stakeholders engaged in the agricultural sector in Liberia.

II. SUMMARY INFORMATION

Activity Name	Feed the Future Liberia Agribusiness Development Activity (LADA)
Implementing Partner	Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA)
Subcontractors	SoukTel Business Start-Up Center (BSC) Monrovia Global Cold Chain Alliance Enclude
Cooperative Agreement Number	AID-669-A-16-00005
Total Estimated Ceiling of the Evaluated Activity (TEC)	US\$19,322,627.00 Excluding Cost Share (Non-Federal): US\$ 1,304,725.00
Life of Strategy/Activity	December 9, 2015 – December 8, 2020
Activity Geographic Regions	Bong, Lofa, Nimba, and Rural Montserrado Counties
Development Objective (DO)	DO2 – Sustained, Market Driven Economic Growth to Reduce Poverty
USAID Office	USAID/Liberia Economic Growth
Agreement Officer's Representative	Maurice Ogutu
Alternate Agreement Officer's Representative	Tefferu Betru

III. BACKGROUND

Low agricultural productivity in Liberia is due to poor production techniques used by smallholder farmers, limited availability and usage of certified seeds and fertilizers, poor road infrastructure and lack of electricity for processing of agricultural products. The sector is also characterized by underdeveloped value chains, limited market opportunities for staples, and poor linkage between producers and markets.

Other constraints include lack of access to credit; and the Government's lack of capacity to provide extension services to smallholder farmers. The above factors, in addition to high dependency on food imports, are the major barriers to agricultural sector growth in Liberia. "While food crop production is growing in post-conflict Liberia, incentives for Smallholder Farmers to produce surplus food for commercialization are limited because of minimal transport and storage options, poor farmer organization, and poor linkages to markets. However, there are important domestic market opportunities that should be realized. For example, nearly 60 percent of the *gari* (a form of processed cassava) consumed in Liberia is imported instead of locally produced."⁷¹ Most of the people living outside Monrovia depend on agriculture as their major source of livelihoods. The sector depends on non-wage labor and traditional working groups "kuus" predominantly women. The smallholder farmers have very limited capacity for capital investment in agricultural inputs to increase productivity and the sector is less attractive to the youth. The stimulation of private sector investment in the agricultural sector by increasing incentives, improving technical knowledge, and building relationships will have a catalytic effect in the agricultural sector growth in Liberia.⁷²

A. Description of the Problem, Development Hypothesis, and Theory of Change

LADA is the USAID/Liberia flagship Feed the Future (FtF) activity for addressing reduction in poverty and hunger. The LADA activities are a continuation of USAID's engagement in food security and enabling environment for private enterprise growth in Liberia, which was started by the Food and Enterprise Development activity that ended in December 2016.

The goal of LADA is to increase agricultural incomes of smallholder farmers through increasing private sector investment in the Liberian agribusiness sector. This contributes to the overall USAID/Liberia Development Objective 2 (DO) for Economic Growth: sustained, market-driven economic growth to reduce poverty. Specifically, LADA contributes to two of the Intermediate Results (IR) under DO 2: IR 2.1 Food Security Enhanced and IR 2.3 Enabling Environment Supports Private Enterprise Growth.

As stated in the Cooperative Agreement, "CNFA will improve access to finance, quality inputs, mechanization, agricultural advice and markets so that Liberian Smallholder Farmers can increase their production and participation in the market." CNFA's implementation will focus on sustainability and achievement of the three results:

1. Increased private sector investment in agricultural input systems.
2. Increased private sector investment in post-harvest handling support, storage, packaging, transporting, marketing and auxiliary services.
3. Strengthened facilitation, market information, advocacy and support.

Theory of Change – "If the private sector increases investments in the provision of inputs, as well as processing and marketing services, then Liberian Smallholder Farmers will experience greater productivity and increased incomes. This will make agriculture a more inclusive, attractive vocation, particularly to youth and women."

Intended Results – By 2019, "Liberia will have more active input, processing, and marketing systems for high-potential agricultural value chains, reflected by US\$8.75million increase in total private investment. This will result in an estimated US\$2,800 per person increase in smallholder farmer incomes, over 20,000 farmers using improved inputs and technologies, and a 483 percent increase in volume of commodities with added value."

⁷¹ LADA Cooperative Agreement, page 15, paragraph 2.

⁷² LADA Cooperative Agreement, page 15, paragraphs 3-4.

The LADA Results Framework is provided in Annex I. To link the LADA results framework to the overall USAID/Liberia objectives, refer to the USAID/Liberia results framework in Annex II. The USAID/Liberia Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) can be accessed on this web site (<https://www.usaid.gov/liberia/cdcs>).

B. Summary of Activity to be Evaluated

The “CNFA’s targeted results of attracting investment in input markets and post-harvest value adding activities can be achieved by scaling up aggregation clusters that currently exist in Liberia in a limited number; providing tailored support to their members; and strengthening the business linkages between them. An aggregation cluster is an integrated group of stakeholders in which smallholder farmers are organized and connected to formal buyers via effective aggregators (typically cooperatives and small and medium enterprises) who facilitate and coordinate their access to all or some of the key services they need. The aggregation model integrates the demand pull for inputs and supply push for processing. Depending on their capabilities, aggregators can be cooperatives, large scale farmers operating an out-grower scheme, wholesalers, or processors; similarly, service providers can be aggregators or agro dealers. Advisory services can be provided by agents of the aggregator or a private provider.”

LADA will facilitate linkage of stakeholders at all levels of the targeted value chains with business and post-harvest technical assistance, co-investment grants used to upgrade their post-harvest systems, and linkages with sources of finance that address working capital constraints among farmer cooperatives or groups. The activity is implemented in Bong, Lofa, Nimba, and rural Montserrado Counties and target audiences include smallholder farmers, cooperatives, aggregators, processors, agro dealers, and other stakeholders engaged in rice, cassava, vegetables, aquaculture and cocoa value chains with emphasis on reaching out to youth and women.

IV. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The questions below will help understand progress made toward achieving the goals and objectives of LADA.

1. To what extent has progress been made in achieving the objectives under LADA?
 - Will LADA interventions lead to an increase in smallholder farmer incomes? What progress has been made so far and by what amounts? Consider in light of Liberian economic context.
 - Will LADA interventions lead to an increase in private sector investments in agro input systems; and aggregation, processing, marketing, and auxiliary services? Consider quantity, quality, and relevance.
 - How much has credit use increased in different segments of the value chain?
 - What are the successes, unintended outcomes, and challenges?
 - Are there opportunities to integrate more STIP?
 - To what extent is LADA addressing gender and youth in its activities?
2. How effectively has LADA worked with the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI), Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), and Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) in policy development, capacity building, and other activities? What are the successes and challenges?
3. To what extent has LADA’s approach contributed to value chain systems (e.g. processing, post-harvest, and marketing) that are sustainable?

V. EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation is expected to apply both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. The evaluation team will conduct a desk review of available literature including activity documents,

survey reports, research and evaluation findings. Site visits over approximately 25 working days in the field to the four target counties (Bong, Lofa, Nimba, and Montserrado) will provide qualitative data for analysis through methods such as in-depth and key informant interviews, focus groups, and direct observation. The selection of sites will be done in consultation with the USAID/Liberia FtF team. The evaluation team is expected to meet with farmers, local government officials, local NGOs, implementing partners, subcontractors, and other beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders in order to acquire the data needed to respond to the evaluation questions. In-depth key informant interviews, conducted face-to-face and based on a semi-structured questionnaire, will provide much of the necessary qualitative data. For producer groups, enterprises, and community groups, focus group discussions are recommended as an efficient way to collect information.

LADA has a dedicated team of M&E personnel and a mature IT system for ongoing data collection and analysis. Program M&E output and outcome data is supplemented by implementing partner-conducted annual surveys of beneficiaries which will be available to the evaluation team. Population-based survey (PBS) data on progress toward achieving FtF's high-level objectives of poverty alleviation and improved nutrition have been conducted through a household survey in the target counties in 2012 and 2015. This year, the Mission is not going to conduct a PBS, and the evaluation team is encouraged to conduct desk review of the current Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) and current Demographic and Health Survey data to estimate poverty alleviation and improved nutrition outcomes in the ZOI. These datasets along with the activity's Performance Indicator Database System (PIDS) data will provide strong secondary quantitative data for review.

In addition, the evaluation team will collect primary quantitative data through mini-surveys. These are different from large-scale quantitative surveys in that, typically, questions are limited to 15-30, questionnaire can be completed within 30 minutes, and sample size is kept small (25-70 cases). A mini-survey will allow for rapid statistical analysis of beneficiary perceptions, benefits, and challenges. The qualitative data collection will also be supplemented through quantification of qualitative information, especially through participatory ranking exercises that will provide numeric insight on respondent priorities.

The USAID/Liberia Economic Growth team will provide documents for the desk review, as well as contact information for prospective interviewees. The evaluation team will be responsible for identifying and reviewing additional materials relevant to the evaluation, as well as additional contacts. Illustrative data sources include but are not limited to:

1. LADA Cooperative Agreement Award
2. FtF/Liberia Multi-Year Strategy
3. LADA statement of work and annual work plans
4. LADA monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan
5. FtF performance management plan
6. LADA quarterly and annual reports
7. LADA data quality assessment reports
8. Performance Indicator Database System data
9. PBS baseline and midpoint survey reports
10. LADA baseline survey reports and beneficiary surveys
11. Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA)
12. Gender Assessment for the USAID/Liberia CDCS
13. Liberia Demographic and Health Survey 2013
14. Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2017
15. AgCLIR assessment 2014
16. Food and Enterprise Development Activity Final Report 2017
17. USAID Liberia Country Cooperation Development Strategy (CDCS)
18. National strategic plans from the GOL

VI. DELIVERABLES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Inception Report: Evaluation Work Plan and Design

Within two weeks of beginning the desk review, a draft work plan and design for the evaluation should be completed by the lead evaluator and submitted to USAID/Liberia. The Inception Report will include task timeline, logistical arrangements, methodology outlining the approach to be used in answering each evaluation question, team responsibilities, data analysis plan, and report writing tasks and timeline. The evaluation design that will become an annex of the evaluation report. The evaluation design will include: (1) a detailed evaluation design matrix that links the evaluation questions in the SOW to data sources, methods, and the data analysis plan; (2) draft questionnaires and other data collection instruments or their features; (3) the list of potential interviewees and sites to be visited and proposed selection criteria and/or sampling plan (must include calculations and a justification of sample size, plans how the sample frame will be developed, and the sampling methodology); (4) known limitations to the evaluation design; and (5) a dissemination plan. The evaluation team must develop a conflict of interest mitigation plan based on the Disclosure of Conflict of Interests signed during contracting. The evaluation team may need to have meetings with the Mission to review and discuss the SOW in its entirety, clarify team members' role and responsibilities, discuss the process for devising a work plan, develop data collection methods, review and clarify any logistical and administrative procedures for the assignment and instruments, and prepare for the in-brief with USAID/Liberia.

2. In-brief Presentation

Within two (2) days of arrival in Monrovia, Liberia, the evaluation team will have a planning meeting with USAID/Liberia and implementing partners for introductions, discuss the team's understanding of the assignment, initial assumptions, evaluation questions, methodology, and work plan. The discussions may also include adjusting of the SOW if necessary. Based on the finalized methodology and design, the evaluation team will then hold an official in-briefing with USAID/Liberia and implementing partners.

3. Interim Briefings

The Evaluation Team Leader (or his/her delegate) will brief the FtF team on progress with the evaluation on at least a weekly basis, in person or by electronic communication. Any delays or complications must be quickly communicated to USAID/Liberia as early as possible to allow quick resolution and to minimize any disruptions to the evaluation process.

4. Debrief Presentation

The evaluation team will present the major findings from the evaluation to USAID/Liberia and partners through a PowerPoint (or similar) presentation prior to the team's departure from the country. The debriefing will cover preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations to USAID/Liberia.

5. Draft Evaluation Report

The draft evaluation report on the findings and recommendations should be consistent with the guidance provided in the following section and submitted to USAID/Liberia within two weeks after departure of international team members from Monrovia. The written report should clearly describe findings, conclusions, and recommendations. USAID will provide consolidated comments on the draft report within five (5) working days of submission. The draft report will also be shared with the implementing partner and GOL for comments and an opportunity to disclose a statement of difference, if applicable.

6. Final Evaluation Report

The evaluation team will submit a final report that incorporates the Mission's comments and suggestions no later than ten (10) days after USAID/Liberia provides written comments on the team's draft report.

Liberia Strategic Analysis will submit the final report to USAID/Liberia. All data and records including copies of secondary quantitative data sets, transcripts of interviews and focus groups, and notes from direct observations will be submitted to USAID in electronic form in easily readable format, organized, and documented for use by those not fully familiar with the intervention or evaluation and owned by USAID.

7. Findings Workshop

LSA will facilitate a Findings Workshop one to three months after submission of the final evaluation report with USAID, implementing partners, and relevant stakeholders. This will provide an opportunity to engage USAID and stakeholders in identifying opportunities for findings application. This engagement will lead to a more tailored plan on how to collaboratively apply findings and lessons learned directly to relevant decision making, including policy development, and larger sectoral assessment needs. The workshop will be a one-day session facilitated by Liberia Strategic Analysis with the aim of ensuring that the findings of the performance evaluation are being used.

The draft evaluation report should meet the following criteria:

- i. The report should be in line with USAID Evaluation Policy (see Appendix I – Criteria to Ensure the Quality of the Evaluation Report) and USAID Secretariat Style guide.
- ii. The report should be no longer than 30 pages, excluding executive summary, table of contents, and annexes.
- iii. The report should include a 3-5 page Executive Summary highlighting findings and recommendations.
- iv. The report should represent a thoughtful and well-organized effort to objectively respond to the evaluation questions.
- v. The report shall address all evaluation questions included in the SOW.
- vi. Evaluation methodology shall be explained in detail and all tools used in conducting the evaluation such as questionnaires, checklists and discussion guides shall be included in an Annex in the final report.
- vii. Limitations to the evaluation shall be disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology (selection bias, recall bias, etc.).
- viii. Evaluation findings should be specific, concise and supported by strong quantitative or qualitative evidence.
- ix. Recommendations should be action-oriented, practical, specific, and evidence-based.
- x. The final report should be edited and formatted.
- xi. Liberia Strategic Analysis must submit the final evaluation to the Development Experience Clearinghouse.

The report will be submitted electronically. The final report will be edited/formatted by the contractor and provided to USAID/Liberia five working days after the Mission has reviewed the content and approved the final revised version of the report. The final evaluation report must be 508 compliant and comply with the USAID Evaluation Policy: <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/USAIDEvaluationPolicy.pdf>

VII. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION

USAID/Liberia recommends that the evaluation team be composed of four individuals: one team leader, two technical experts, and an evaluation specialist.

- I. Team Leader/Senior Evaluation Specialist: S/he will be responsible for the overall implementation of the evaluation and ensuring that all expected tasks and deliverables are achieved on time and of high

quality. S/he must have at least eight years' professional experience in evaluation management, qualitative data collection, and analysis. The candidate must have demonstrated expertise in agribusiness development and experience implementing USAID programs, especially in West Africa and similar settings. The candidate must have exceptional organizational, analytical, writing and presentation skills. Ability to produce high quality evaluation reports in English is essential. Strong interpersonal skills are required.

2. **Agricultural Economist:** A technical specialist with at least eight years of experience designing and/or evaluating activities on agriculture value chains, private sector development, and market systems development in West Africa. The candidate must have demonstrated analytical skills in estimating costs and return of investment related to the production and distribution of goods and services in agriculture industry. The candidate should be familiar with technology in agriculture and should have knowledge of different value chains, including vegetable, rice, aquaculture, cassava, and cocoa. Analysis will include budgets, costing by outputs, and survey data. The candidate must have exceptional organizational, analytical, writing and presentation skills. Knowledge of USAID rules, regulations, and procedures in this sector is highly desirable. Strong interpersonal and English language writing skills required.
3. **Agribusiness Specialist:** S/he sectoral specialist with experience and knowledge about the Liberian context, particularly on agribusiness and working with aggregators. The candidate should have at least five years' professional experience in value chain development. Some experience in gender analysis and managing or implementing research programs is preferable. The incumbent must be able to conduct interviews and focus group discussions, analyze the resulting data, and be familiar with qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Strong English language speaking and writing skills are also essential.
4. **Evaluation Specialist:** The candidate should have at least five years relevant experience in qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The local consultant must have experience evaluating agribusiness programs and have demonstrated logistics and planning skills. He/she should have broad knowledge of Liberian agriculture value chain issues and the ability to assist in qualitative instrument preparation, key informant interviews, data collection, and analysis of collected data. Strong American English language speaking and writing skills are also essential.

USAID leaves to the offeror's discretion other necessary team members/staff for the evaluation (e.g. logistics, scheduling, translation, data analysis). Aside from the above mentioned key personnel, the offeror must decide how the evaluation team should be structured in order to successfully address the evaluation questions. All attempts should be made for the team to be gender balanced and to include local (Liberian) experts. A statement of potential bias or conflict of interest (or lack thereof) is required from each team member.

USAID may propose internal staff from USAID/Liberia or from Washington to accompany the team in this evaluation as observers. As observers, their role will be to provide, when asked, background information and to reply to the external evaluators' questions. They will review and comment on the report for accuracy, but evaluators may accept or reject comments. The final report should reflect the opinions of the external evaluators and is the sole responsibility of the selected evaluation team.

VIII. EVALUATION SCHEDULE AND LOGISTICS

Logistical Support

The contractor will be responsible for all international and in-country administrative and logistical support, including identifying and fielding appropriate consultants (international and local).

The evaluation team should be able to make all logistical arrangements including vehicle rental for travel within and outside Monrovia and should not expect any logistical support from the Mission. The team should also make their own arrangements for venues for team meetings, and equipment support for producing the report.

Schedule

Evaluation team members are authorized and expected to work a six-day week. Travel over weekends may be necessary. Work should commence as soon as practicable but no later than March 15, 2018. For planning purposes, contractors should be aware of Liberian and US holidays during the evaluation time frame.

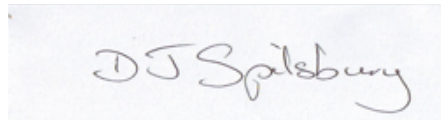
The evaluation should follow the illustrative timeline and level of effort given below.

Task/Deliverable	Estimated time (Days)		
	Team Leader	Int'l Team Member	Lib Team Member
Review background documents & preparatory work (offshore)	6	6	4
Travel to Liberia	2	2	0
Team Planning Meetings in Monrovia with IP and USAID/Liberia FtF team	2		
In-brief with USAID/Liberia and prepare for field work Submit Inception Report	4		
Field work: Data collection and on-going data analysis	23 (including field travel)		
Debrief presentation with USAID/Liberia and IP	1		
Analysis and report drafting	12	11	8
LSA performs quality assurance check and edits draft report	6		
LSA submits draft report to USAID/Liberia	1		
USAID/Liberia and IP provide comments on draft report	10		
Team Leader revises draft report to incorporate comments and submit final report	5	2	0
LSA performs quality assurance check and submits final report	5		
LSA facilitates learning event	1	0	2
Total time required	77		
Working days for consultants	56	51	44

ANNEX F: DISCLOSURE OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

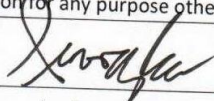
Name	John Spilsbury
Title	Team Leader
Organization	Social Impact
Evaluation Position?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Team member
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	
USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	Liberia Agribusiness Development Activity
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation. 	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	
Date	15 th March 2018


Name	Harold Peabody
Title	Value Chain Specialist
Organization	Social Impact
Evaluation Position?	<input type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team member
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	—
USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	—
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to: 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	
Date	3/2/18

Name	ALBERT J. THOMPSON
Title	MEL SPECIALIST
Organization	SOCIAL IMPACT INC
Evaluation Position?	<input type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team member
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	
USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	LADA/CNFA DEVELOPMENT LIBERIA AGRIBUSINESS ACTIVITY
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<p>If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:</p> <p>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation. 	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	
Date	April 2, 2018

Name	Joe Warnick
Title	Agribusiness Specialist
Organization	Social Impact
Evaluation Position?	<input type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team member
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	
USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	Liberia Agribusiness Development Activity
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i> 7. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 8. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 9. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 10. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 11. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 12. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	
Date	3/2/18

ANNEX G: OVERVIEW OF THE LIBERIAN ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Liberia has a population of over 4.6 million people with approximately 43% under the age of 15. The reported rural population in 2016 was 49.9% (tradingeconomics.com/World Bank, 2018). The country's rate of urbanization is 3.24% per year (CIA World Factbook 2018) while they have a population growth rate of 2.5% (data.worldbank.org 2018). This suggests a growing demand for food that is increasingly urbanized.

Liberia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita was USD 753 (PPP constant dollars) (country GDP of USD 2.1 billion) in 2016. GDP averaged USD 642 from 1990 to 2016, achieving a high of USD 875 in 1990 (tradingeconomics.com/World Bank, 2018). GDP declined from 8.7% growth in 2013 to 0.0% in 2015, and then to -0.5% in 2016 (UNDP 2016 Human Development Index - The World Bank). The Ebola crises and sharp declines in the prices of export commodities (iron ore, palm oil, rubber) in 2014 and 2015 were severe setbacks to the Liberian economy, but in 2017, Liberia's GDP reversed course to expand by 2.5% (tradingeconomics.com/Central Bank of Liberia, 2018). While the 2.5% GDP growth is encouraging, population changes point to flat or declining per capita incomes. World Bank Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (Atlas method (current US\$)) shows 2014: GNI USD 370, 2015 GNI USD 380 and 2016 GNI USD 370⁷³ emphasising the flat income trend.

The Liberian dollar's exchange rate has depreciated 28% since January of 2017 (IMF Press Release No. 18-97, March 2018), which has driven the inflation rate to its current level of 15.4% (tradingeconomics.com/Central Bank of Liberia, 2018). The cost of food increased by 8% from January 2017 to January 2018. Food inflation has averaged 10.85% from 2007 to 2018 (tradingeconomics.com/Central Bank of Liberia, 2018). The depreciating Liberian dollar has also made imported agro inputs more expensive in local currency. It has also increased the value of exports, such as cocoa, in Liberian dollar terms.

The interest rate is currently at 13.3%. Interest rates have averaged 14.1% from 2003 to 2017, reaching a record low of 13 percent in February 2017 and a record high of 20.3% in September 2004 (tradingeconomics.com/Central Bank of Liberia, 2018).

The country imports up to 90% of its staple food (rice) that makes it vulnerable to changes in global food prices. In 2017 Liberia imported 380,000 MT of rice (USDA Index Mundi), which was a 22% increase over 2016 imports. Liberia's principle exports are iron ore, rubber, diamonds, gold, palm oil, coffee beans, and cocoa beans.⁷⁴

Liberia has traditionally relied upon an economic model based on the extraction of mineral resources. This has not led to a diversified economy that can create employment and withstand external price shocks. The Liberian economy depends significantly on foreign financial assistance and remittances from the diaspora.

⁷³ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD?locations=LR>

⁷⁴ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/li.html>

ANNEX H: LADA LESSONS LEARNED EVENT ACTION PLAN

NOVEMBER 7, 2018

Four months after the finalization of the evaluation report, LSA facilitated a LADA Lessons Learned event to engender utilization of the midterm evaluation. The learning event brought together various actors to discuss the intersection between agriculture and the private sector, what interventions are working, and how stakeholders can better collaborate. Illustrated below are Action Plans developed per stakeholder group during the LADA Lessons Learned Event. While some groups were not able to fully detail all fields in the Action Plan matrix, their prioritized recommendations are maintained.

LADA Action Plan

Recommendation	Action	Related Work	Who Owns Action	Timeframe
1) Shift towards Facilitator role	C1: Train NAIDAL leaders + agro-dealers (Not farmers) C2: Train aggregators/processors on post-harvest practices C3: AIN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy • Business Development Services • MIS (marketing information system) 	CIF Grants: NAIDAL, CARI, NSL	CI Lead/NAIDAL	July 2018 – September 2019
2) Address beneficiary ‘mindset’ expecting distributions/ ‘free money’	1. Change CIF criteria to remove in-kind contribution (new capital investment) 2. Loan Guarantee program: to promote pre-financing schemes of aggregators/processors 3. Promote forward contracting between farmers 4. Leverage relationships with GoL & Donors/NGOs to limit freebies	CI & 2 training modules	CI & C2 leads + A2F team	

Recommendation	Action	Related Work	Who Owns Action	Timeframe
3) Emphasis on market linkages	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Link agro-dealers to farmers 2. Facilitate development of aggregation schemes 3. Strengthen marketing & branding capacity of business (promo materials packaging) 4. Set-up online sales platform through AIN linking demand to suppliers 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CI & C2 2. C2 3. CIF 4. C3/AIN 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>FY 19</p>

Private Sector Facilitators' Action Plan: BSC, AIN, Banks

Recommendation	Action	Related Work	Who Owns Action	Timeframe
1) Periodic Training (Aquaculture)	Liaise with technical support unit of Fishery Agency	NaFAA training in fish farming	NFAA, AIN, BSC	Q1 FY19
2) GoL to collaborate with financial institutions to create access to financing mechanisms	Liaise with stakeholders (CBL, MFDP, MoCI)	AfriLand First Bank	GoL/MFDP	Q3 & Q4 FY19
3) Need to create awareness on nutritional benefits of vegetables	Nutrition Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio awareness • Flyers, Jingles • Social Media 	MoH, WFP, WHO	MoH, BSC, AIN	Q1 FY19
4) Establishing cassava hubs	Liaise with stakeholders to construct additional cassava hubs in close proximity to cassava producers	SAPEC, GoL, LADA	LADA, SAPEC and/or Private Entrepreneurs	Q4 FY19
5) Strengthen extension for cocoa market	Identify potential buyers/investors	GROW, LADA, ACIDI-VOCA	BSC, AIN	Q1 and Q2 FY19

Private Sector Actors' Action Plan: Cooperatives, Processors, Aggregators, Associations

Recommendation	Action	Related Work	Who Owns Action	Timeframe
1) Storage facilities	To construct storage facilities		CNFA, GoL, Farmers/Aggregators	Short term
2) Market Linkages	To carry on awareness and identify possible market place for value chain actors		Aggregators/processors GoL and LADA	Short term
3) Access to Finance	To identify local and international financial institution			
4) Duty Free privileges for all agriculture related inputs				

Government Action Plan: CARI and NaFAA

Recommendation	Action	Related Work	Who Owns Action	Timeframe
1) Strengthen existing aquaculture regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-stakeholder consultation Review existing regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration with WB Marine Fishery regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish Farmers Federation NaFAA EPA MoA 	Medium term
2) Improve farm to market roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct needs-assessment Collaborate with responsible institution for roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USAID Ministry of Public Works (Feeder roads) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Public Works USAID NaFAA MoA 	Long term
3) Increasing access to quality feed and seeds (Fingerlings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equip existing hatchery facilities Adopt modern hatchery technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LADA EU WB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NaFAA CARI LADA MoCI 	Short term
4) Providing certified seeds/planting materials	Testing and evaluating seeds/planting material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Africa Rice IITA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CARI MoA 	Short/medium term

Recommendation	Action	Related Work	Who Owns Action	Timeframe
5) Introducing alternative income generating opportunities for rice processors	Conduct research on existing technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbonizer • Briquetter • Mushroom Production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africa Rice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CARI • MoA • Africa Rice • IITA 	Medium term
6) Strengthen testing and evaluation in other research programs	Promote adaptive research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africa Rice • IITA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CARI • MoA • IITA • NaFAA • MoCI 	Long term

Donor and Technical Partners' Action Plan

Recommendation	Action	Related Work	Who Owns Action	Timeframe
1) Building synergies in vegetables, aquaculture and rice	Define areas of collaboration	Vegetable production and marketing	FAO & USAID	Ongoing
2) Improve the Donors' coordination	Re-activate the Agri Donor working group	Policy	All Donors	Short/Medium term
3) Cassava growing hubs and processing units	Define areas of collaboration	Value addition and production	WHH, CWW, ZOA, USAID	Ongoing
4) Improve market access and linkage	Improve farm to market roads and use of ICT services	Infrastructure	WHH, USAID, SIDA	Ongoing and planned
5) Building skills in food quality schemes and post-harvest loss	Training and joint monitoring	Value addition and production	WHH, ZOA, MoCI, MoA	Ongoing
6) Linking farmers to innovative financial schemes	Support access to finance through VSLA	Micro Finance	WHH, ZOA, CWW, SPARK and others	Ongoing

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